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SELECTIONS FROM MODERN POETS

SELECTIONS FROM MODERN POETS

COMPLETE EDITION
(*First and Second Series*)

Made by
J. C. SQUIRE

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PREFACE TO FIRST SELECTIONS

No Poet represented in this book was over fifty when, in 1919, I began to compile it. The oldest of them all was born in 1870.

Many good and some great living poets are therfore missing from its pages. Nothing is here by Mr Hardy or Mr Bridges, by Mr A. E. Housman, Mr Yeats, Æ, Mr Binyon, Mr Hewlett, Mr Herbert Trench, Mr Gosse, Mr Austin Dobson, Mr Doughty, Mr Kipling, Sir Henry Newbolt, Mrs Meynell, Mrs Woods, Mr Wilfrid Blunt, and others whose names must appear in any comprehensive anthology from living poets. The date, 1870, was arbitrarily chosen : so would any other date have been. But some date I had to fix, for my object was to illustrate what many of us think an exceptional recent flowering.

I do not propose to analyse the tendencies, in idea and in method, exhibited in the poems here collected. These things are always better seen at a distance ; and anyhow the materials are here, for the production of an analysis by the reader himself, if he is eager for one. But I will express one opinion, and call attention to one phenomenon. The opinion is that the majority of the poems in this book have merit and that many more could have been printed without lowering the standard. And the phenomenon is the simultaneous appearance—the result of underlying currents of thought and feeling—of a very large number of poets who write only or mainly in lyrical forms. Several living

poets of the highest repute have won their reputation solely on short poems, and there are, and have been, a very large number indeed who have written one or two good poems.

The better production of our generation has been mainly lyrical and it has been widely diffused. Where is the ambitious work on a large scale? Where is the twentieth century poet who is fulfilling the usual functions of the greatest poets: to display human life in all its range and variety, or to exercise a clear and powerful influence on the thought of mankind with regard to the main problems of our existence? These questions are asked; possibly Echo may give its traditional and ironic answer.

There are several observations, however, which should be made. One is that the great doctrinal poets have not always become widely recognised as such in their own prime, their general vogue being posthumous. Another is that we cannot possibly tell what a poet now living and young may or may not do before he dies. But though I have my own views on this subject I do not think that the age, even if admitted to be purely lyrical, stands in need of defence. It is of no use asking a poetical renascence to conform to type, for there isn't any type. There are marked differences in the features of all those English poetical movements which have chiefly contributed to the body of our "immortal" poetry. In the Elizabethan age we had the greatest diversity of production: a multitude of great and small men, with much genius, or but a spark of it blown to life by the favourable wind, produced works in every form and on every scale. The age of Herbert and Vaughan, of Crashaw, Herrick, Marvell, Carew, Suckling,

Lovelace, Corbet, Habington, is memorable almost solely for its lyrical work. The era of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats was an age during which a vast amount of great poetry was written by a few great poets ; there was very little healthy undergrowth. Should our literary age be remembered by posterity solely as an age during which fifty men had written lyrics of some durability for their truth and beauty, it would not be remembered with contempt. It is in that conviction that I have compiled this anthology.

1921. J. C. S.

PREFACE TO SECOND SELECTIONS

THE volume, *Selections from Modern Poets*, of which this is a sequel, was an attempt to illustrate the work which had been done by the younger English poets. It included poems by men living and dead. A man's contemporaneousness is not governed by the accident of survival ; the dead who died young were more " modern " than their elders who survived them for years ; so I took a date of birth and made that my line of division. I included nothing by any poet, living or dead, who had been born before 1870. That was resolved in 1919 ; I have now moved my date on by five years ; and the present collection includes no work by anyone who will be, or if living would have been, fifty before 1924 has ended.

This means that some of the best-known names in the

first volume will not be found here. The loss of many fine poems may be compensated for by the presence of much interesting work by the youngest generation of writers. About half of my first list do not reappear; some because they have passed the age-limit, some because they have written nothing recently, some because they were already dead five years ago. In their place will be found as many more, including one or two dead soldiers whose work I did not know when I made my last selections.

For a general statement of my object in bringing these poems together I must refer the reader to my former preface. What I said then I still believe; and if, so far as the general body of readers is concerned, there seems to-day less eagerness than there was to welcome the work of young poets, I feel all the more strongly the obligation to call attention to its merits. I cannot hope that any other person will think I have included all the good poems that I might have found, or that there are no weaknesses in the selection I have actually made.

1924. J. C. S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I HAVE to thank the living poets from whose works I have drawn for permitting me to use everything I wanted. I am grateful to Mrs Brooke and Rupert Brooke's literary executor, Mr Edward Marsh (whose " Georgian " collections have been a great stimulus and help to me) for permission to use a selection from Brooke; to Mrs J. E. Flecker for poems by her husband; to Lady Desborough for the poems by her son, Julian Grenfell; to Lord Dunsany for the poems by Francis Ledwidge; to Mrs Thomas Macdonagh and Mrs Joseph Plunkett for the poems by their husbands; to Mrs Owen for her son Wilfrid Owen's *Strange Meeting*; to Professor W. R. Sorley for the poems by his son, Charles Sorley; to Lady Glenconner for those by her son, Edward Wyndham Tennant; to Mr Edward Thomas for the poems (published too late for him ever to know how people would admire them) by Edward Thomas.

Finally, almost every publisher in the kingdom has assisted the book with permission to reprint copyright poems. The full list is as follows:

Messrs Bell (Edward L. Davison); Blackwell (E. Wyndham Tennant); Blackwood (Alfred Noyes); Bowes and Bowes (J. R. Ackerley, A. Y. Campbell, Edward Davison, Frank Kendon, J. B. Priestley); Burns, Oates and Washbourne (G. K. Chesterton); Cambridge University Press (C. H. Sorley); Cape (W. H. Davies); Chatto and Windus (Robert Nichols, Wilfred Owen); R. Cobden-Sanderson (Edmund Blunden and J. Middleton Murry); Collins (F. Brett Young, Edward Shanks, Gerald Gould); Constable (Gordon Bottomley, P. H. B. Lyon, Rose Macaulay, W. de La Mare); Christophers (F. V. Branford); Dent (G. K. Chesterton); Duckworth (H. Belloc, D. H. Lawrence, Sturge Moore); Heffer (A. Y. Campbell); Heinemann (Robert Graves, John Masefield, Siegfried Sassoon, Dorothy Wellesley); Hodder and Stoughton (Paul Bewsher); Herbert

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SELECTIONS FROM MODERN POETS

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

MARRIAGE SONG

I

Come up, dear chosen morning, come,
Blessing the air with light,
And bid the sky repent of being dark:
Let all the spaces round the world be white,
And give the earth her green again.
Into new hours of beautiful delight,
Out of the shadow where she has lain,
Bring the earth awake for glee,
Shining with dews as fresh and clear
As my beloved's voice upon the air.
For now, O morning chosen of all days, on thee
A wondrous duty lies:
There was an evening that did loveliness foretell;
Thence upon thee, O chosen morn, it fell
To fashion into perfect destiny
The radiant prophecy.
For in an evening of young moon, that went
Filling the moist air with a rosy fire,
I and my beloved knew our love;
And knew that thou, O morning, wouldst arise
To give us knowledge of achieved desire.
For, standing stricken with astonishment,
Half terrified in the delight,
Even as the moon did into clear air move
And made a golden light,
Lo there, croucht up against it, a dark hill,

A monſtrous back of earth, a spine
Of hunchèd rock, furred with great growth of pine,
Lay like a beaſt, snout in its paws, asleep ;
Yet in its sleeping seemed it miserable,
As though ſtrong fear muſt always keep
Hold of its heart, and drive its blood in dream.
Yea, for to our new love, did it not seem,
That dark and quiet length of hill,
The sleeping grief of the world ?—Out of it we
Had like imaginations ſtept to be
Beauty and golden wonder ; and for the lovely fear
Of coming perfect joy, had changed
The terror that dreamt there !
And now the golden moon had turned
To shining white, white as our souls that burned
With vision of our prophecy assured :
Suddenly white was the moon ; but she
At once did on a woven modeſty
Of cloud, and soon went in obscured :
And we were dark, and vanisht that ſtrange hill.
But yet it was not long before
There opened in the sky a narrow door,
Made with pearl lintel and pearl sill ;
And the earth's night seem'd pressing there,—
All as a beggar on some feſtival would peer,—
To gaze into a room of light beyond,
The hidden silver splendour of the moon.
Yea, and we also, we
Long gazed wiſtfully
Towards thee, O morning, come at laſt,
And towards the light that thou wilt pour upon us soon !

II

O soul who still art strange to sense,
Who often against beauty wouldst complain,
Doubting between joy and pain:
If like the startling touch of something keen
Against thee, it hath been
To follow from an upland height
The swift sun hunting rain
Across the April meadows of a plain,
Until the fields would flash into the air
Their joyous green, like emeralds alight;
Or when in the blue of night's mid-noon
The burning naked moon
Draws to a brink of cloudy weather near,
A breadth of snow, firm and soft as a wing,
Stretcht out over a wind that gently goes,—
Through the white sleep of snowy cloud there grows
An azure-border'd shining ring,
The gleaming dream of the approaching joy of her;—
What now wilt thou do, Soul? What now,
If with such things as these troubled thou wert?
How wilt thou now endure, or how
Not now be strangely hurt?—
When utter beauty must come closer to thee
Than even anger or fear could be;
When thou, like metal in a kiln, must lie
Seized by beauty's mightily able flame;
Enjoyed by beauty as by the ruthless glee
Of an unescapable power;
Obeying beauty as air obeys a cry;

Yea, one thing made of beauty and thee,
As steel and a white heat are made the same!
—Ah, but I know how this infirmity
Will fail and be not, no, not memory,
When I begin the marvellous hour.
This only is my heart's strain'd eagerness,
Long waiting for its bliss.—
But from those other fears, from those
That keep to Love so close,
From fears that are the shadow of delight,
Hide me, O joys; make them unknown to-night!

III

Thou bright god that in dream camest to me last night,
Thou with the flesh made of a golden light,
Knew I not thee, thee and thy heart,
Knew I not well, god, who thou wert?
Yea, and my soul divinely understood
The light that was beneath thee a ground,
The golden light that cover'd thee round,
Turning my sleep to a fiery morn,
Was as a heavenly oath there sworn
Promising me an immortal good:
Well I knew thee, God of Marriages, thee and thy flame!
Ah, but wherefore beside thee came
That fearful sight of another mood?
Why in thy light, to thy hand chained,
Towards me its bondage terribly strained,
Why came with thee that dreadful hound,
The wild hound Fear, black, ravenous, and gaunt?
Why him with thee should thy dear light surround?

Why broughtest thou that beast to haunt
The blissful footsteps of my golden dream ?—
All shadowy black the body dread,
All frenzied fire the head,—
The hunger of its mouth a hollow crimson flame,
The hatred in its eyes a blaze
Fierce and green, stabbing the ruddy glaze,
And sharp white jetting fire the teeth snarl'd at me,
And white the dribbling rage of froth,—
A throat that gaped to bay and paws working violently,
Yet soundless all as a winging moth ;
Tugging towards me, famishing for my heart ;—
Even while thou, O golden god, wert still
Looking the beautiful kindness of thy will
Into my soul, even then must I be,
With thy bright promise looking at me,
Then bitterly of that hound afraid ?—
Darkness, I know, attendeth bright,
And light comes not but shadow comes :
And heart must know, if it know thy light,
Thy wild hound Fear, the shadow of love's delight.
Yea, is it thus ? Are we so made
Of death and darkness, that even thou,
O golden god of the joys of love,
Thy mind to us canst only prove,
The glorious devices of thy mind,
By so revealing how thy journeying here
Through this mortality, doth closely bind
Thy brightness to the shadow of dreadful Fear ?—
Ah no, it shall not be ! Thy joyous light
Shall hide me from the hunger of fear to-night.

IV

For wonderfully to live I now begin :
So that the darkness which accompanies
Our being here, is fasten'd up within
The power of light that holdeth me ;
And from these shining chains, to see
My joy with bold misliking eyes,
The shrouded figure will not dare arise.
For henceforth, from to-night,
I am wholly gone into the bright
Safety of the beauty of love :
Not only all my waking vigours plied
Under the searching glory of love,
But knowing myself with love all satisfied
Even when my life is hidden in sleep ;
As high clouds, to themselves that keep
The moon's white company, are all possest
Silverly with the presence of their guest ;
Or as a darken'd room
That hath within it roses, whence the air
And quietness are taken everywhere
Deliciously by sweet perfume.

EPILOGUE

What shall we do for Love these days ?
How shall we make an altar-blaze
To smite the horny eyes of men
With the renown of our Heaven,
And to the unbelievers prove
Our service to our dear god, Love ?

What torches shall we lift above
The crowd that pushes through the mire,
To amaze the dark heads with strange fire ?
I should think I were much to blame,
If never I held some fragrant flame
Above the noises of the world,
And openly 'mid men's hurrying stares,
Worshipt before the sacred fears
That are like flashing curtains furl'd
Across the presence of our lord Love.
Nay, would that I could fill the gaze
Of the whole earth with some great praise
Made in a marvel for men's eyes,
Some tower of glittering masonries,
Therein such a spirit flourishing
Men should see what my heart can sing :
All that Love hath done to me
Built into stone, a visible glee ;
Marble carried to gleaming height
As moved aloft by inward delight ;
Not as with toil of chisels hewn,
But seeming poised in a mighty tune.
For of all those who have been known
To lodge with our kind host, the sun,
I envy one for just one thing :
In Cordova of the Moors
There dwelt a passion-minded King,
Who set great bands of marble-hewers
To fashion his heart's thanksgiving
In a tall palace, shapen so
All the wondering world might know

The joy he had of his Moorish lass.
His love, that brighter and larger was
Than the starry places, into firm stone
He sent, as if the stone were glass
Fired and into beauty blown.
Solemn and invented gravely
In its bulk the fabric stood,
Even as Love, that trusteth bravely
In its own exceeding good
To be better than the waste
Of time's devices; grandly spaced,
Seriously the fabric stood.
But over it all a pleasure went
Of carven delicate ornament,
Wreathing up like ravishment,
Mentioning in sculptures twined
The blitheness Love hath in his mind;
And like delighted senses were
The windows, and the columns there
Made the following sight to ache
As the heart that did them make.
Well I can see that shining song
Flowering there, the upward throng
Of porches, pillars and windowed walls,
Spires like piercing panpipe calls,
Up to the roof's snow-cloud flight;
All glancing in the Spanish light
White as water of arctic tides,
Save an amber dazzle on sunny sides.
You had said, the radiant sheen
Of that palace might have been

A young god's fantasy, ere he came
His serious worlds and suns to frame;
Such an immortal passion
Quiver'd among the slim hewn stone.
And in the nights it seemed a jar
Cut in the substance of a star,
Wherein a wine, that will be poured
Some time for feasting Heaven, was stored.
  But within this fretted shell,
The wonder of Love made visible,
The King a private gentle mood
There placed, of pleasant quietude.
For right amidst there was a court,
Where always muskèd silences
Listened to water and to trees;
And herbage of all fragrant sort,—
Lavender, lad's-love, rosemary,
Basil, tansy, centaury,—
Was the grass of that orchard, hid
Love's amazements all amid.
Jarring the air with rumour cool,
Small fountains played into a pool
With sound as soft as the barley's hiss
When its beard just sprouting is;
Whence a young stream that trod on moss,
Prettily rimpled the court across.
And in the pool's clear idleness,
Moving like dreams through happiness,
Shoals of small bright fishes were;
In and out weed-thickets bent
Perch and carp, and sauntering went

With mounching jaws and eyes a-ſtare ;
Or on a lotus leaf would crawl
A brinded loach to bask and sprawl,
Taſting the warm sun ere it dipt
Into the water ; but quick as fear
Back his shining brown head slipt
To crouch on the gravel of his lair,
Where the cooled sunbeams broke in wrack,
Spilt shatter'd gold about his back.
So within that green-veiled air,
Within that white-walled quiet, where
Innocent water thought aloud,—
Childish prattle that muſt make
The wise sunlight with laughter shake
On the leafage overbowed,—
Often the King and his love-lass
Let the delicious hours pass.
All the outer world could see
Graved and sawn amazingly
Their love's delighted riotise,
Fixt in marble for all men's eyes ;
But only these twain could abide
In the cool peace that withinside
Thrilling desire and passion dwelt ;
They only knew the ſtill meaning spelt
By Love's flaming script which is
God's word written in ecſtasies.
And where is now that palace gone,
All the magical skill'd ſtone,
All the dreaming towers wrought
By Love as if no more than thought

The unresisting marble was ?
How could such a wonder pass ?
Ah, it was but built in vain
Against the stupid horns of Rome,
That pusht down into the common loam
The loveliness that shone in Spain.
But we have raised it up again !
A loftier palace, fairer far,
Is ours, and one that fears no war.
Safe in marvellous walls we are ;
Wondering sense like builded fires,
High amazement of desires,
Delight and certainty of love,
Closing around, roofing above
Our unapproacht and perfect hour
Within the splendours of love's power.

J. R. ACKERLEY

THE PORTRAIT OF A MOTHER

Your calm eyes watch me as I pace the floor;
Across the room and back they follow me:
Calm eyes, calm eyes, what do you watch me for;
Calm eyes that cannot see?

There is some hidden meaning in your gaze,
Which sweeps and swells upon me like a tide:
There is some word, some swift elusive phrase
Between your lips has died.

There is a kind of horror in your stare,
As though you shrank in fear from something strange.
'Tis but my fancy. It was never there,
And portraits do not change.

O watch me not! In quest of solitude
I turn among the shadows as I pace;
But I have not the power to elude
The vigil of your face.

I move away, you follow with your gaze;
I steal a glance, your eyes are watching me;
I scan your face, no movement it betrays . . .
They turn so stealthily.

'Tis but a trick that any can disprove,
A simple fraud, a trick of pose and light.
Calm eyes, behind that glass you cannot move;
Calm eyes, you have no sight.

Your power is gone. In me you have no part.
The babe you suckled and remembered still
Whene'er you took the schoolboy to your heart
Is stranger to your will.

What do you see? That fixed, relentless look
Searching my visage seems to learn from it.
The face of man is not an open book
In which his sins are writ.

My face betrays no secrets; Saturn ploughs
The lines upon the skin in other wise;
The vilest thoughts are hived in tranquil brows
And peep from tranquil eyes.

You look and shrink . . . as though I had betrayed
Some sacred trust laid on me by a child;
Or smothered Love in secret as he played,
Smothered him as he smiled.

Why do you move beside me as I move?
O close your eyes and shut my thoughts from me!
It was too beautiful . . . the face of Love . . .
For my mortality.

E. N. DA C. ANDRADE

WITH A COPY OF "THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS"

Too plain for this accomplisht age
Our Fletcher's fresh and simple page :
Too crude and gross-improbable
The faery deeds he turns to tell :
Too frail by far such fancies, vain
Such themes, not to be heard again.

—But be you so at war with time
As still to love once-honoured rhyme,
O, be you such as song can please
You shall hear such harmonies,
Such melody of concènt meet
As Nature makes with influence sweet
On a summer afternoon ;
Or as the resplendent moon
Draws from all the silver-blue
Countryside, when clouds are few.

Come, take hands, you are not such
As this will weary overmuch.
Sit we down, and hear rehearse
The marvels of the sweet-souled verse,
All the works that wonderly
Befel the night in Thessaly.
Keep holy silence, meed no less
Is due the FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.

E. N. Da C. Andrade

FATE AND THE LITTLE FLOWERS

You know the wild flowers suit your hair :
Place hands full of the purple bloom
Of loosestrife, glad of such soft doom,
And tender-toned narcissus there ;

Green leaves and wind-flowers, take them all.
As fate that rules us, sweet, be blind
In this your choice, nor, as you bind,
Care which hold fast, while others fall—

Fall to be trodden underfoot,
Though all ways fair as those you take,
Or those that in the neighbouring brake
Still suck sweet moisture from the root.

A SONG FOR EDMUND BLUNDEN

THE BOY AND THE BIRDS

" You little birds, so free from care,
Who slide on the supporting air
As I do on this slope of green,
And peck the dirt, but keep you clean,

Who drink bright dew, and when you will
On grain and grass seed eat your fill,
And see when berries first are red,
Looking on trees from overhead,

E. N. Da C. Andrade

What are the secrets that you sing
So blithely ; from what journeying
Do you take rest when day is done ? "
A brown bird answered him anon—

" We are not clean, the dirt we peck
Cleaves to the feathers of the neck ;
Men walk on earth, and in the air
Hawks fly, we are not free from care.

Your father bears an iron reed
Filled with a flame that makes us bleed ;
Your kindly mother loves to tear
Feathers and skin to deck her hair.

Memories of winter want make keen
The songs we sing now leaves are green.
Victims of many a strange deceiving
We sing lest death should catch us grieving."

—He ceased, and with an artful note
Of sweets and shrills composed his throat.
And I have set down what I heard
From this philosophising bird.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

THE BUZZARDS

When evening came and the warm glow grew deeper,
And every tree that bordered the green meadows
And in the yellow cornfields every reaper
And every corn-shock stood above their shadows
Flung eastward from their feet in longer measure,
Serenely far there swam in the sunny height
A buzzard and his mate who took their pleasure
Swirling and poising idly in golden light.

On great pied motionless moth-wings borne along,
So effortless and so strong,
Cutting each other's paths together they glided,
Then wheeled asunder till they soared divided
Two valleys' width (as though it were delight
To part like this, being sure they could unite
So swiftly in their empty, free dominion),
Curved headlong downward, towered up the sunny steep,
Then, with a sudden lift of the one great pinion,
Swung proudly to a curve, and from its height
Took half a mile of sunlight in one long sweep.

And we, so small on the swift immense hillside,
Stood tranced until our souls arose uplifted
On those far-sweeping, wide,
Strong curves of flight—swayed up and hugely drifted,
Were washed, made strong and beautiful in the tide

Of sun-bathed air. But far beneath, beholden
Through shining deeps of air, the fields were golden
And rosy burned the heather where cornfields ended.

And still those buzzards whirled, while light withdrew
Out of the vales and to surging slopes ascended,
Till the loftiest flaming died to blue.

IN LAMPLIGHT

Now that the chill October day is declining,
Pull the blinds, draw each voluminous curtain
Till the room is full of gloom and of the uncertain
Gleams of firelight on polished edges shining.
Then bring the rosy lamp to its wonted station
On the dark-gleaming table. In that soft splendour
Well-known things of the room, grown deep and tender,
Gather around, a mysterious congregation :—
Pallid sheen of silver, the bright brass fender,
The wine-red pool of carpet, the bowl of roses
Lustrous-hearted, crimsons and purples looming
From dusky rugs and curtains. Nothing discloses
The unseen walls but the broken richly-glooming
Gold of frames and opulent wells of mingling
Dim colours gathered in darkened mirrors. And breaking
The dreamlike spell and out of your deep chair moving
You go, perhaps to the shelves and, slowly singling
Some old rich-blazoned book, return. But the gleaming
Spells close round you again and you fall to dreaming,
Eyes grown dim, the book on your lap unheeded.

MISS THOMPSON GOES SHOPPING

Miss Thompson at Home

In her lone cottage on the downs,
With winds and blizzards and great crowns
Of shining cloud, with wheeling plover
And short grass sweet with the small white clover,
Miss Thompson lived, correct and meek,
A lonely spinster, and every week
On market-day she used to go
Into the little town below,
Tucked in the great downs' hollow bowl,
Like pebbles gathered in a shoal.

She Goes a-Marketing

So, having washed her plates and cup
And banked the kitchen fire up,
Miss Thompson slipped upstairs and dressed,
Put on her black (her second best),
The bonnet trimmed with rusty plush,
Peeped in the glass with simpering blush,
From camphor-smelling cupboard took
Her thicker jacket off the hook
Because the day might turn to cold.
Then, ready, slipped downstairs and rolled
The hearthrug back ; then searched about,
Found her basket, ventured out,
Snecked the door and paused to lock it
And plunged the key in some deep pocket.
Then as she tripped demurely down
The steep descent, the little town

Spread wider till its sprawling street
Enclosed her and her footfalls beat
On hard stone pavement; and she felt
Those throbbing ecstasies that melt
Through heart and mind as, happy, free,
Her small, prim personality
Merged into the seething strife
Of auction-marts and city life.

She Visits the Bootmaker

Serenely down the busy stream
Miss Thompson floated in a dream.
Now, hovering beelike, she would stop
Entranced before some tempting shop,
Getting in people's way and prying
At things she never thought of buying;
Now wafted on without an aim.
And thus in course of time she came
To Watson's bootshop. Long she pries
At boots and shoes of every size,
Brown football boots, with bar and stud,
For boys that scuffle in the mud,
And dancing-pumps with pointed toes
Glassy as jet, and dull black bows;
Slim ladies' shoes with two-inch heel,
And sprinkled beads of gold and steel.
"How anyone can wear such things!"
On either side the doorway springs
(As in a tropic jungle loom
Masses of strange thick-petalled bloom
And fruits misshapen) fold on fold

A growth of sandshoes rubber-soled,
Clambering the doorposts, branching, spawning
Their barbarous bunches like an awning
Over the windows and the doors.

Is Tempted

But, framed among the other stores,
Something has caught Miss Thompson's eye
(O worldliness, O vanity !),
A pair of slippers—scarlet plush.
Miss Thompson feels a conscious blush
Suffuse her face, as though her thought
Had ventured further than it ought.
But O that colour's rapturous singing
And the answer in her lone heart ringing !
She turns (O, Guardian Angels, stop her
From doing anything improper !).
She turns ; and, see, she stoops and bungles
In through the sandshoes' hanging jungles,
Away from light and common sense,
Into the shop dim-lit and dense
With smells of polish and tanned hide.
Soon from a dark recess inside
Fat Mrs. Watson comes, slip slop,
To mind the business of the shop.
She walks flat-footed with a roll—
A serviceable, homely soul,
With kindly, ugly face like dough,
Hair as colourless as tow.
A huge Scotch pebble fills the space
Between her bosom and her face.

One sees her making beds all day.
Miss Thompson lets her say her say
—" So chilly for the time of year.
It's ages since we saw you here "—
Then, heart a-flutter, speech precise,
Describes the shoes and asks the price.
" Them, miss ? Ah, them is six-and-nine ! "

Wrestles with the Temptation

Miss Thompson shudders down the spine
(Dream of impossible romance).
She eyes them with a wistful glance,
Torn between good and evil. Yes,
For half-a-minute, and no less,
Miss Thompson strives with seven devils,
Then soaring over earthly levels,
Turns from the shoes with lingering touch—

And is Saved

" Ah, six-and-nine is far too much !
Sorry to trouble you. Good-day ! "

She Visits the Fishmonger

A little further down the way
Stands Miles's fish shop, whence is shed
So strong a smell of fishes dead
That people of a subtler sense
Hold their breath and hurry thence.
Miss Thompson hovers there and gazes.
Her housewife's knowing eye appraises
Salt and fresh, severely cons

Kippers bright as tarnished bronze;
Great cods disposed upon the sill,
Chilly and wet with gaping gill,
Flat head, glazed eye, and mute, uncouth,
Shapeless, wan, old-woman's mouth.
Next, a row of soles and plaice,
With querulous and twisted face,
And red-eyed bloaters, golden-grey;
Smoked haddocks ranked in neat array;
A group of smelts that take the light
Like slips of rainbow, pearly bright;
Silver trout with rosy spots,
And coral shrimps with keen black dots
For eyes, and hard and jointed sheath
And crisp tails curving underneath.
But there upon the sanded floor,
More wonderful in all that store
Than anything on slab or shelf,
Stood Miles the fishmonger himself.
Foursquare he stood and filled the place.
His huge hands and his jolly face
Were red. He had a mouth to quaff
Pint after pint: a sounding laugh,
But wheezy at the end, and oft
His eyes bulged outwards and he coughed.
Aproned he stood from chin to toe.
The apron's vertical long flow
Warped grandly outwards to display
His hale, round belly hung midway,
Whose apex was securely bound
With apron-strings wrapped round and round.

Outside Miss Thompson, small and staid,
Felt, as she always felt, afraid
Of this huge man who laughed so loud
And drew the notice of the crowd.
Awhile she paused in timid thought,
Then promptly hurried in and bought
"Two kippers, please. Yes, lovely weather."
"Two kippers? Sixpence altogether."
And in her basket laid the pair
Wrapped face to face in newspaper.

Relapses into Temptation

Then on she went, as one half blind,
For things were stirring in her mind.
Then turned about with fixed intent,
And, heading for the bootshop, went

And Falls

Straight in and bought the scarlet slippers,
And popped them in beside the kippers.

She Visits the Chemist

So much for that. From there she tacked,
Still flushed by this decisive act,
Westward, and came without a stop
To Mr. Wren the chemist's shop,
And paused outside a while to see
The tall, big-bellied bottles, three—
Red, blue, and emerald, richly bright,

Each with its burning core of light.
The bell chimed as she pushed the door,
Spotless the oilcloth on the floor,
Limpid as water each glass case,
Each thing precisely in its place.
Rows of small drawers, black-lettered each
With curious words of foreign speech,
Ranked high above the other ware.
The old strange fragrance filled the air,
A fragrance like the garden pink,
But tinged with vague medicinal stink
Of camphor, soap, new sponges, blent
With chloroform and violet scent.
And Wren the chemist tall and spare
Stood gaunt behind his counter there.
Quiet and very wise he seemed,
With skull-like face, bald head that gleamed;
Through spectacles his eyes looked kind;
He wore a pencil tucked behind
His ear. And never he mistakes
The wildest signs the doctor makes
Prescribing drugs. Brown paper, string
He will not use for anything,
But all in neat white parcels packs
And sticks them up with sealing wax.
Miss Thompson bowed and blushed, and then
Undoubting bought of Mr. Wren,
Being free from modern scepticism,
A bottle for her rheumatism,
Also some peppermints to take
In case of wind; an oval cake

Of scented soap ; a penny square
Of pungent naphthalene to scare
The moth. And after Wren had wrapped
And sealed the lot, Miss Thompson clapped
Them in beside the fish and shoes.
" Good-day," she says, and off she goes.

Is Led Away by the Pleasure of the Town

Bee-like Miss Thompson, whither next ?
Outside you pause awhile, perplext,
Your bearings lost. Then all comes back
And round she wheels, hot on the track
Of Giles the grocer ; and from thence
To Emilie the milliner,
There to be tempted by the sight
Of hats and blouses fiercely bright.
(O guard Miss Thompson, Powers that Be,
From Crudeness and Vulgarity !)
Still on from shop to shop she goes
With sharp bird's-eye, inquiring nose,
Prying and peering, entering some,
Oblivious of the thought of home.

Is Convinced of Indiscretion

The town brimmed up with deep-blue haze,
But still she stayed to flit and gaze,
Her eyes a-blur with rapturous sights,
Her small soul full of small delights,

Empty her purse, her basket filled.
The traffic in the town was stilled.
The clock struck six. Men thronged the inns.
Dear, dear, she should be home long since.

And Returns Home

Then as she climbed the misty downs
The lamps were lighted in the town's
Small streets. She saw them star by star
Multiplying from afar;
Till, mapped beneath her, she could trace
Each street and the wide, square market-place
Sunk deep and deeper as she went
Higher up the steep ascent.
And all that soul-uplifting stir
Step by step fell back from her,
The glory gone, the blossoming
Shrivelled, and she, a small, frail thing,
Carrying her laden basket. Till
Darkness and silence of the hill
Received her in their restful care
And stars came dropping through the air.

But loudly, sweetly sang the slippers
In the basket with the kippers,
And loud and sweet the answering thrills
From her lone heart on the hills.

HONEY HARVEST

Late in March, when the days are growing longer
And sight of early green
Tells of the coming spring and suns grown stronger,
Round the pale willow-catkins there are seen
  The year's first honey-bees
Stealing the nectar: and bee-masters know
This for the first sign of the honey-flow.

Then in the dark hillsides the Cherry-trees
Gleam white with loads of blossom where the gleams
Of piled snow lately hung, and richer streams
The honey. Now, if chilly April days
  Delay the Apple blossom and the May's
  First week come in with sudden summer weather,
The Apple and the Hawthorn bloom together
And all day long the plundering hordes go round
And every overweighted blossom nods.
But from that gathered essence they compound
Honey more sweet than nectar of the gods.
Those blossoms fall ere June, warm June that brings
The small white Clover. Field by scented field,
Round farms like islands in the rolling weald,
It spreads thick-flowering or in wildness springs
Short-stemmed upon the naked downs, to yield
A richer store of honey than the Rose,
The Pink, the Honeysuckle. Thence there flows
Nectar of clearest amber, redolent
  Of every flowery scent
That the warm wind upgathers as he goes.

In mid-July be ready for the noise
Of million bees in old Lime-avenues,
As though hot noon had found a droning voice
To ease her soul. Here for those busy crews
Green leaves and pale-stemmed clusters of green flowers
Build heavy-perfumed, cool, green-twilight bowers
Whence, load by load, through the long summer days
They fill their glassy cells
With dark green honey, clear as chrysoprase,
Which housewives shun ; but the bee-master tells
This brand is more delicious than all else.
In August-time, if moors are near at hand,
Be wise and in the evening-twilight load
Your hives upon a cart, and take the road
By night : that, ere the early dawn shall spring
And all the hills turn rosy with the Ling,
  Each waking hive may stand
Established in its new appointed land
Without harm taken, and the earliest flights
Set out at once to loot the heathery heights.

That vintage of the heather yields so dense
And glutinous a syrup that it foils
Him who would spare the comb and drain from thence
  Its dark-full-flavoured spoils :
For he must squeeze to wreck the beautiful
Frail edifice. Not otherwise he sacks
Those many chambered palaces of wax.

Then let a choice of every kind be made
And, labelled, set upon your storehouse racks—

Of Hawthorn-honey that of almond smacks :
The luscious Lime-tree-honey green as jade :
Pale Willow-honey, hived by the first rover :
That delicate honey culled
From Apple-blossom, that of sunlight tastes :
And sunlight-coloured honey of the Clover.
Then, when the late year wastes,
When night falls early and the moon is dulled
And the last warm days are over,
Unlock the store, and to your table bring
Essence of every blossom of the spring.
And if, when wind has never ceased to blow
All night, you wake to roofs and trees becalmed
In level wastes of snow,
Bring out the Lime-tree-honey, the embalmed
Soul of a lost July, or Heather-spiced
Brown-gleaming comb wherein sleeps crystallised
All the hot perfume of the heathery slope.
And, tasting and remembering, live in hope.

AUTUMN

All day the Planes have shaken from shadow to sun
Their long depending boughs, and one by one
From early-falling Limes the yellow leaves
Have eddied to earth ; but still warm noon deceives
Our fears of change. But when with the twilight came
From the dim garden an air like sharp cold flame
And bitter with burnt leaves, I knew once more
That the walls were down between love and the silent,
frore

Wastes of eternity. O, lean above me,
Screening my eyes with your hair like a dark willow
From the cold glare of death. O, you that love me,
Lean with your body's weight, that the cold billow
Not yet may lift me away; though love and light,
Roses and leaves and fruit prepare to-night
With unreturning wings
To launch upon the eternal flux of things.

GREY

Grey of the twilight, come,
Spread those wide wings above our meadows: bring
Coolness and mist: make dumb
The jarring noise of day, and gently ring
Our woods and ponds with dimness: take away
All busy stir, but let the grey owl sway
Noiselessly over the bough like a little ghost:
And let the cricket in the dark hedge sing
His withered note: and, O Immortal Host,
Welcome this traveller to your drowsy hall
And, standing at the porch, speechless and tall,
Close the great doors, shut out the world, and shed
Your benediction on this drooping head.

GREEN

While August burns on dusty roads and fields
I lie beneath green shields
Of coolest shade from a chestnut's airy dome :
And I slowly leave my idle body and roam
Up through the luminous deep home
Of soft green leaves, move flowingly between
Each motionless light-hung fan, from screen to screen
Of filtered shadow and light ;
From peaceful height ascending to peaceful height
Where the very air is green.

But when I have retraced
The lowly journey to our human air,
Who knows what unimagined shores I paced
Or the timeless seasons of my sojourn there.

KENNETH H. ASHLEY

NORMAN CHURCH: NEW COAL-FIELD

Beneath the hill a littered landscape spread
All newly varnished by the garish sun;
New corn shone harsh and green, but new brick's harsher red
Showed that down there more coal than corn was won.
Tall chimneys flew their smoke as masts fly flags;
Great wheels on headstocks spun, and stopt, and spun again;
Pubs, cinemas, fried fish and chips, and fags—
Such were suggested by that cluttered plain—
Hot asphalt; Council schools; packed cottages in rows;
Spoil banks and cinder paths and broken hedges;
Barbed wire, corrugated iron, all that goes
With smirchèd farms and building land in wedges.
And all this litter was so raw, so new,
Even when derelicted each thing glowed,
Shattered but modern; glittered to the view
Like a smashed bottle on a tar-mac road.
The very sky, so hot, so smooth, so bright,
Seemed that day newly turned, dust-proof and water-tight.
And then I started; for my glance lit on
A grim grey tower, screened by foliage—
Incongruous, startling, its grey pallor shone—
A strayed spectator from another age.
I do not think I should have been
Much more surprised if I had seen

One of those men who many a year before
Had left this vale to fight at Agincourt.
If I had seen him with my eyes,
Tricked out in his forgotten guise,
Himself bewildered, but uncowed,
Pushing his way, come striding through
The gaping, staring, cloth-capped crowd,
To this old church ; to this one place he knew.

COW AND SEED STACK

Thick cud riseth :
Slowly to chew—
Slowly to swallow—
Cud riseth anew.
To swing the tail—
Fly hummeth by—
Sun striketh hot :
To cover the eye.
Wind bringeth a smell ;
Smells well within—
To widen the nose ;
Cud riseth thin.
Rare is that smell,
Rarely it puts
Craving in belly,
Pulleth at guts.
To get me up :
To have in mind
Smelleth as that
Food that eats kind.

Slowly to rise :
To arch the back ;
To husk the throat ;
Dry joints to crack ;
So : surely to go,
Surely to find,
Food that eats well,
Up field, up wind.

GOODS TRAIN AT NIGHT

The station is empty and desolate ;
A sick lamp wanly glows ;
Slowly puffs a goods engine,
Slow yet alive with great energy ;
Drawing rumbling truck
After rumbling, rumbling truck ;
Big, half-seen, insensate.
Yet each as it jolts through the glow
Responds to the questioning light
Dumbly revealing
Diverse personality :
" Neal & Co." ; " John Bugsworth " ; " Norland Collieries Limited " ;
" Jolly & Sons " ; " Jolly & Sons " ; " Jolly & Sons " ;
Thrice repeated, percussive, insistent—
Each wet wall-side successively announcing
Names : badges and symbols of men,
Of men in their intricate trafficking—
But there quickens a deeper emotion,

Roused by the iterant names,
Beyond the mere intricate commerce,
The infinite wonder of life.
Effort and hope and love, the heart's desire,
Leap in the womb of the brain
As the trucks clang their way through the night.
Slides by the guard's van at the last,
With a last definite clatter of steel upon steel
And a glitter of ruby-red light.

So: silence recaptures the station;
The damp steam eddies out;
The drizzle weaves a silver pattern,
An endless shining silver pattern,
A silver woof in the lamplight.
And I find myself full of a grief—
A dull little grief for humanity.

THE OWL AT "THE SWAN"

You who loved twilight and the dusky night
Must perch transfixed, undazzled, in this room
Of smoke and fume and talk and garish light:
A rigid mummy in a glassy tomb,
Tawdry with paint and artificial grass,
With sand and moss, and boughs of cork and glue,
Until some spring a careless servant lass
Shatter your case and make an end of you;
Or moth within your case finding its way
Shall breed new life to work your last decay.

You knew this countryside ; your ſtill wings were
Part of its glamour forty years ago,
As in the twilight you came sweeping there
Round ſtack, and ivied barn, and old hedgerow—
From Stubbins Wood you'd beat to Assarts Farm
And then by Flixter Beck to Nickerbush—
Until one eve the cool sweet curfew calm
Was broken by a gun, and with a tumbling rush
To earth you came ; wings whirling o'er and o'er,
And life's myſterious light informed your eyes no more.

Your race is reckoned wise and mine more so ;
But ne'er a seer of us can caſt a spell,
To shield our memories safe from overthrow,
That's one whit better than your fragile shell.
And gallant bipeds, many and many a one,
Who made much ſtir and flutter in their day,
From their familiar hunting fields have gone,
And not one relic of their flight does ſtay :
Old gunning Time has ta'en them altogether,
Nor left of their brave plumage one poor feather.

MAURICE BARING

DIFFUGERE NIVES, 1917

To J. C. S.

The snows have fled, the hail, the lashing rain,
Before the spring.
The grass is starred with buttercups again,
The blackbirds sing.

Now spreads the month that feast of lovely things
We loved of old.
Once more the swallow glides with darkling wings
Against the gold.

Now the brown bees about the peach trees boom
Upon the walls;
And far away beyond the orchard's bloom
The cuckoo calls.

The season holds a festival of light
For you, for me;
But shadows are abroad, there falls a blight
On each green tree.

And every leaf unfolding, every flower
Brings bitter meed;
Beauty of the morning and the evening hour
Quickens our need.

All is reborn, but never any spring
Can bring back this ;
Nor any fullness of midsummer bring
The voice we miss.

The smiling eyes shall smile on us no more ;
The laughter clear,
Too far away on the forbidden shore,
We shall not hear.

Bereft of these until the day we die,
We both must dwell ;
Alone, alone, and haunted by the cry :
" Hail and farewell ! "

Yet when the scythe of Death shall near us hiss,
Through the cold air,
Then on the shuddering marge of the abyss
They will be there.

They will be there to lift us from sheer space
And empty night ;
And we shall turn and see them face to face
In the new light.

So shall we pay the unabated price
Of their release,
And found on our consenting sacrifice
Their lasting peace.

The hopes that fall like leaves before the wind,
The baffling waste,
And every earthly joy that leaves behind
A mortal taste,

The uncompleted end of all things dear,
The clanging door
Of death, for ever loud with the last fear,
Haunt them no more.

Without them the awakening world is dark
With dust and mire;
Yet as they went they flung to us a spark,
A thread of fire,

To guide us while beneath the sombre skies
Faltering we tread,
Until for us like morning stars shall rise
The deathless dead.

JULIAN GRENFELL

Because of you we will be glad and gay,
Remembering you, we will be brave and strong;
And hail the advent of each dangerous day,
And meet the last adventure with a song.
And, as you proudly gave your jewelled gift,
We'll give our lesser offering with a smile,
Nor falter on that path where, all too swift,
You led the way and leapt the golden stile.

Whether new paths, new heights to climb you find,
Or gallop through the unfooted asphodel,
We know you know we shall not lag behind,
Nor halt to waste a moment on a fear;
And you will speed us onward with a cheer,
And wave beyond the stars that all is well.

PIERRE

I saw you starting for another war,
The emblem of adventure and of youth,
So that men trembled, saying: "He forsooth
Has gone, has gone, and shall return no more."
And then out there, they told me you were dead,
Taken and killed; how was it that I knew,
Whatever else was true, that was not true?
And then I saw you pale upon your bed,

Scarcely a year ago, when you were sent
Back from the margin of the dim abyss;
For Death had sealed you with a warning kiss,
And let you go to meet a nobler fate:
To serve in fellowship, O fortunate:
To die in battle with your regiment.

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

When I am living in the Midlands
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening:
My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea;
And it's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be;
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day:
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and grey;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,
A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the Rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise,
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there,
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend:
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will there be to comfort me
Or who will be my friend?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald,
They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plough the field,
By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

THE NIGHT

Most holy Night, that still dost keep
The keys of all the doors of sleep,
To me when my tired eyelids close
Give thou repose.

And let the far lament of them
That chant the dead day's requiem
Make in my ears, who wakeful lie,
Soft lullaby.

Let them that know the horned moon
By my bedside their memories croon.
So shall I have new dreams and blest
In my brief rest.

Fold your great wings about my face,
Hide dawning from my resting-place,
And cheat me with your false delight,
Most Holy Night.

SONG

INVITING THE INFLUENCE OF A YOUNG LADY UPON THE OPENING YEAR

I

You wear the morning like your dress
And all with mastery crowned;
When as you walk your loveliness
Goes shining all around.
Upon your secret, smiling way
Such new contents were found,
The Dancing Loves made holiday
On that delightful ground.

II

Then summon April forth, and send
Commandment through the flowers;
About our woods your grace extend,
A queen of careless hours.
For oh, not Vera veiled in vain,
Nor Dian's sacred Ring,
With all her royal nymphs in train
Could so lead on the Spring.

THE FALSE HEART

I SAID to Heart, " How goes it ? "
Heart replied :
" Right as a Ribstone Pippin ! "
But it lied.

HANNAKER MILL (1913)

SALLY is gone that was so kindly ;
Sally is gone from Hannaker Hill,
And the briar grows ever since then so blindly ;
And ever since then the clapper is still . . .
And the sweeps have fallen from Hannaker Mill.

Hannaker Hill is in desolation ;
Ruin a-top and field unploughed.
And Spirits that call on a falling nation,
Spirits that loved her calling aloud,
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.

Spirits that call and no one answers—
Hannaker's down and England's done.
Wind and thistle for pipe and dancers,
And never a ploughman under the sun :
Never a ploughman, never a one.

TARANTELLA

Do you remember an Inn,
Miranda ?
Do you remember an Inn ?
And the tedding and the spreading
Of the straw for a bedding,
And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,
And the wine that tasted of the tar ?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
(Under the dark of the vine verandah) ?
Do you remember an Inn, Miranda,
Do you remember an Inn ?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
Who hadn't got a penny,
And who weren't paying any,
And the hammer at the doors and the Din ?
And the Hip ! Hop ! Hap !
Of the clap
Of the hands to the twirl and the swirl
Of the girl gone chancing,
Glancing,
Dancing,
Backing and advancing,
Snapping to the clapper to the spin
Out and in—
And the Ting, Tong, Tang of the guitar ?
Do you remember an Inn,
Miranda ?
Do you remember an Inn ?

Never more,
Miranda,
Never more.
Only the high peaks hoar:
And Aragon a torrent at the door.
No sound
In the walls of the Halls where falls
The tread
Of the feet of the dead to the ground.
No sound:
Only the boom
Of the far Waterfall like Doom.

ON A DEAD HOSTESS

Of this bad world the loveliest and the best
Has smiled, and said good-night, and gone to rest.

PAUL BEWSHER

NOX MORTIS

The afternoon
Flutters and dies:
The fairy moon
Burns in the skies
As they grow darker, and the first stars shine
On Night's rich mantle—purple like warm wine.

On each white road
Begins to crawl
The heavy toad:
The night-birds call,
And round the trees the swift bats flit and wheel,
While from the barns the rats begin to steal.

So now must I,
Bird of the night,
Towards the sky
Make wheeling flight,
And bear my poison o'er the gloomy land,
And let it loose with hard unsparing hand.

The chafers boom
With whirring wings,
And haunt the gloom
Which twilight brings—
So in nocturnal travel do I wail
As through the night the wingèd engines sail.

Death, Grief, and Pain
Are what I give.
O that the slain
Might live—might live!
I know them not, for I have blindly killed,
And nameless hearts with nameless sorrow filled.

Thrice cursèd War
Which bids that I
Such death should pour
Down from the sky.
O, Star of Peace, rise swiftly in the East
That from such slaying men may be released.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

ALMSWOMEN

At Quincey's moat the squandering village ends,
And there in the almshouse dwell the dearest friends
Of all the village, two old dames that cling
As close as any trueloves in the spring.
Long, long ago they passed three-score-and-ten,
And in this doll's house lived together then ;
All things they have in common being so poor,
And their one fear, Death's shadow at the door.
Each sundown makes them mournful, each sunrise
Brings back the brightness in their failing eyes.

How happy go the rich fair-weather days
When on the roadside folk stare in amaze
At such a honeycomb of fruit and flowers
As mellows round their threshold ; what long hours
They gloat upon their steepling hollyhocks,
Bee's balsams, feathery southernwood and stocks,
Fiery dragons'-mouths, great mallow leaves
For salves, and lemon plants in bushy sheaves,
Shagged Esau's Hands with five green finger-tips !
Such old sweet names are ever on their lips.
As pleased as little children where these grow
In cobbled pattens and worn gowns they go,
Proud of their wisdom when on gooseberry shoots
They stuck egg-shells to fright from coming fruits
The brisk-billed rascals ; waiting still to see
Their neighbour owls saunter from tree to tree
Or in the hushing half-light mouse the lane
Long-winged and lordly.

But when those hours wane
Indoors they ponder, scared by the harsh ſtorm
Whose pelting saracens on the window swarm,
And liſten for the mail to clatter paſt
And church clock's deep bay withering on the blaſt;
They feed the fire that flings a freakish light
On pictured kings and queens grotesquely bright,
Platters and pitchers, faded calendars,
And graceful hour-glass trim with lavenders.
Many a time they kiss and cry, and pray
Both may be summoned in the self-same day,
And wiseman linnet tinkling in his cage
End too with them the friendship of old age,
And all together leave their treasured room
Some bell-like evening when the May's in bloom.

GLEANING

Along the baulk the grasses drenched in dews
Soak through the morning gleaners' clumsy shoes,
And cloying cobwebs trammel their brown cheeks
While from the shouldering sun the dewfog reeks.
Then soon begun, on ground where yeſterday
The rakers' warning-sheaf forbade their way,
Hard clucking dames in great white hoods make haſte
To cram their lap-bags with the barley waſte,
Scrambling as if a thousand were but one,
Careless of ſtabbing thiſtles. Now the sun
Gulps up the dew and dries the ſtubs, and scores
Of tiny people trundle out of doors
Among the ſtiff ſtalks, where the scratched hands ply,
Red ants and blackamoors and such as fly

Tunbellied, too, with legs a finger long,
The spider harvestman ; the churlish, strong
Black scorpion, prickled earwig, and that mite
Who shuts up like a leaden shot in fright
And lies for dead. And still before the rout
The young rats and the field mice whisk about
And from the trod whisp out the leveret darts
Bawled at by boys that pass with blundering carts
Top-heavy to the red-tiled barns. And still
The children feed their cornsacks with goodwill,
And farm wives ever faster stoop and flounce.
The hawk drops down a plummet's speed to pounce
The nibbling mouse or resting lark away,
The lost mole tries to pierce the mattocked clay
In agony and terror of the sun.

The dinner hour and its grudged leisure won,
All sit below the pollards on the dykes,
Rasped with the twinge of creeping barley spikes :
Sweet beyond telling now the small beer goes
From the hooped hardwood bottles, the wasp knows,
And even hornets whizz from the eaten ash—
Then crusts are dropt and switches snatched to slash,
While, safe in shadow of the apron thrown
Aside the bush which years before was grown
To snap the poacher's nets, the baby sleeps.
Now toil returns, in red-hot fluttering light,
And far afield the weary rabble creeps,
Oft clutching blind wheat black among the white,
That smutches where it touches quick as soot—
Oft gaping where the landrail seems afoot,

Who with such magic throws his baffling speech,
Far off he sounds when scarce beyond arm's reach.
Mongrels are left to mind the morning's gain,
But squinting knaves can slouch to steal the grain ;
Now close the farm the fields are gleaned agen,
Where the boy droves the turkey and white hen
To pick the shelled sweet corn ; their hue and cry
Answers the gleaners' gabble, and sows trudge by
With little pigs to play and rootle there
And all the fields are full of din and blare.

So steals the time past, so they glean and gloat ;
The hobby-horses whir, the moth's dust coat
Blends with the stubble, scarlet soldiers fly
In airy pleasure ; but the gleaners' eye
Sees little but their spoil, or robin flower
Ever on tenterhooks to shun the shower,
Their weather-prophet never known astray ;
When he folds up, then toward the hedge glean they.
But now the dragon of the sky droops, pales,
And wandering in the wet grey western vales,
Stumbles, and passes, and the gleaning's done.
The farmer, with fat hares slung on his gun,
Gives folk good-night as down the ruts they pull
The creaking two-wheeled hand carts bursting full,
And whimpering children cease their teasing squalls,
While left alone the supping partridge calls—
Till all at home is stacked from mischief's way
To thrash and dress the first wild, windy day,
And each good wife crowns weariness with pride,
With such small riches more than satisfied.

BEHIND THE LINE

Treasure not so the forlorn days
When dun clouds flooded the naked plains
  With foul remorseless rains ;
  Tread not those memory ways
Where by the dripping alien farms,
Starved orchards with their shrivelled arms,
The bitter mouldering wind would whine
At the brisk mules clattering towards the Line.

Remember not with so sharp skill
Each chasm in the clouds that with strange fire
  Lit pyramid-fosse and spire
  Miles on miles from our hill ;
In the magic's glass, aye, then their lure
Like heaven's houses gleaming pure
Might soothe the long imprisoned sight
And put the seething storm to flight.

Enact you not so like a wheel
The round of evenings in sand-bagged rooms
  Where candles flicked the glooms ;
  The jests old time could steal
From ugly destiny, on whose brink
The poor fools grappled fear with drink,
And snubbed the hungry raving guns
With endless tunes on gramophones.

About you spreads the world anew,
The old fields all for your sense rejoice,
  Music has found her ancient voice,
  From the hills there's heaven on earth to view ;
And kindly Mirth will raise his glass
To bid you with dull Care go pass—
And still you wander muttering on
Over the shades of shadows gone.

THE PASTURE POND

By the pasture pond alone
I'll call the landscape all my own,
Be the lord of all I see
From water-fly to topmost tree,
And on these riches gloat this day
Till the blue mist warns away.

Here's no malice that could wither
Joy's blown flower, nor dare come hither ;
No hot hurry such as drives
Men through their unsolaced lives ;
Here lie the bees I cannot fare
A span but find some honey there.

The small birds and great as well
In these trees and closes dwell,
And there they never grudge nor brawl,
For nature gives enough for all,
Nor care crows what starling delves
Among the mole-heaps like themselves.

The thrush that haunts the mellow ground
And runs along and glances round
Will run and revel through my brain
For a blue moon befooling pain,
And elms so full of birds and song
There shall be green the winter long.

From the meadows smooth and still
Where the peewits feed their full
And into swirling rings upfly
With white breasts dazzling on the eye
To the pool itself I come
And like rapture am struck dumb :

For if fields and air are free
The water's double liberty,
Where milch cows dewlap-deep may wade
Or jack-hern ply his cunning trade—
Else what but vision dares intrude
That many-peopled solitude ?

The astonished clouds seem lingering here,
For dragon-flies so whip and veer
And take the sun and turn to flame
They'd make the fastest cloud seem lame,
Or breaths of wind that sometimes fly
And cut faint furrows and are by.

So well may I admire the pool
Where thistles and their caps of wool

(Whence those sly winds some flecks purloin)
Stand sentinels at every coign,
And sorrels rusty-red have banned
Each place the thistle left unmanned.

But passing through, an old ally,
Into the bright deeps I may spy,
Where merry younkers, roach or rudd,
Jump for the fly and flounce and scud ;
That care for no one now, and live
For every pleasure pools can give.

In russet weeds, by the sunken boat,
That grudge each other room to float,
They hide along, grown fine and fat,
I hear them like a lapping cat
Feed from the stems till hunger's done—
Then out agen to find the sun.

The moorhen, too, as proud as they
With jerking neck is making way
In horse-shoe creeks where old pike rest
And beetles skate in jostling jest ;
And overhead as large as wrens
Dance hobby-horses of the fens—

From all these happy folk I find
Life's radiance kindled in my mind,
And even when homeward last I turn
How bright the hawthorn berries burn,
How steady in the old elm still
The great woodpecker strikes his bill ;

Whose labour oft in vain is given,
Yet never he upbraids high heaven;
Such trust is his. O I have heard
No sweeter from a singing bird
Than his tap-tapping there this day,
That said what words will never say.

The bells from humble steeples call,
Nor will I be the last of all
To pass between the ringers strong
And as of old make evensong;
While over pond and plat and hall
The first of sleep begins to fall.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream!
Through the yew the sun's last gleam
Lights into a glory extreme
The squirrel-carven pews that dream
Of my fathers far beyond
Their solitary pasture pond.

THE SCYTHE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

A THICK hot haze had choked the valley grounds
Long since, the dogday sun had gone his rounds
Like a dull coal half lit with sulky heat;
And leas were iron, ponds were clay, fierce beat
The blackening flies round moody cattle's eyes.
Wasps on the mudbank seemed a hornet's size
That on the dead roach battened. The plough's increase
Stood under a curse.

Behold, the far release!
Old wisdom breathless at her cottage door
" Sounds of abundance " mused, and heard the roar
Of marshalled armies in the silent air,
And thought Elisha stood beside her there,
And clacking reckoned ere the next nightfall
She'd turn the looking-glasses to the wall.

Faster than armies out of the burnt void
The hour-glass clouds innumerably deployed,
And when the hay-folks next look up, the sky
Sags black above them; scarce is time to fly,
And most run for their cottages; but Ward,
The mower for the inn beside the ford,
And slow strides he with shouldered scythe still bare,
While to the coverts leaps the great-eyed hare.
As he came in the dust snatched up and whirled
Hung high, and like a bell-rope whipped and twirled;
The blazen light glared round, the haze resolved
Into demoniac shapes bulged and convolved.
Well might poor ewes afar make bleatings wild,
Though this old trusting mower sat and smiled,
For from the hush of many days the land
Had waked itself: and now on every hand
Shrill swift alarm notes, cries and counter-cries,
Lowings and crowings came and throbbing sighs.
Now atom lightning brandished on the moor,
Then out of sullen drumming came the roar
Of thunder joining east and west:
In hedge and orchard small birds durst not rest,
Flittering like dead leaves and like wisps of straws,

And the cuckoo called again, for without pause
Oncoming voices in the vortex blurred.
The storm came toppling like a wave, and blurred
In grey the trees that like black steeples towered.
The sun's last yellow died. Then who but cowered?
Down ruddying darkness floods the hideous flash,
And pole to pole the cataract whirlwinds clash.

Alone within the tavern parlour still
Sat the grey mower, pondering on God's will,
And flinching not to flame or bolt, that swooped
With a great hissing rain till terror drooped
In weariness: then and there came a roar
Ten-thousand-fold, he saw not, was no more—
But life bursts on him once again, and blood
Beats droning round, and light comes in a flood.

He stares, and sees the sashes battered awry,
The wainscot shivered, the crooks shattered, and by,
His twisted scythe, melted by its fierce foe,
Whose Parthian shot struck down the chimney. Slow
Old Ward lays hand to his old working-friend,
And thanking God Whose mercy did defend
His servant, yet must drop a tear or two
And think of times when that old scythe was new,
And stands in silent grief, nor hears the voices
Of many a bird that through the lands rejoices,
Nor sees through the smashed panes the seagreen sky,
That ripens into blue, nor knows the storm is by.

THE POOR MAN'S PIG

Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green
And apple-boughs as knarred as old toads' backs
Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen;
The building thrush watches old Job who stacks
The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence;
The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,
And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,
But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty.

Then out he lets her run; away she snorts
In bundling gallop for the cottage door,
With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts,
Then like a whirlwind bumping round once more;
Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,
And sulky as a child when her play's done.

OLD HOMES

O happiest village, how I turned to you,
Beyond estranging years that cloaked my view
With all their heavy fogs of fear and pain;
I turned to you, and never turned in vain.
Through fields yet ringing sad with fancy's dirge,
Landscapes that hunt poor sleep to bedlam's verge,
Green glow your leas, and sweet resound your woods,
And there is laughter in your summer floods.

There the old houses where we lived abide,
And I shall see them, though hot tears should hide
The ken of " home " from that which now I hold.
What though pulled down ?—to me they're as of old.
Those garrets creak as I tiptoe the boards
To find the last lone tenant's fabled hoards,
And silver on the dun November sky
Through quaking panes I see the flood race by
Brown hilltops where the black bines moulder out.
To those same panes when full moon comes about
I hastening home lift daring eyes to learn
If ghost eyes through their sullen crystal burn,
And feel what sight cannot report, and fall
A-shuddering even to face the unlit hall.

Passages crooked and slanted, ceilings stooped,
And yews with drowsy arras overdrooped
The windows of that home, the broad hearths wept
With every shower ; a-dry the great vats slept,
Where one time kercher'd maids had toiled with a will ;
Such nooks were here, a hundred scarce would fill.
And in the farm beside, the barn's sunk tiles
Enclosed a space like to the church's aisles.

Then all about those vasty halls our play
Would hold the evening's lantered gloom at bay,
And senses young received each new-found thing
As meadows feel and glow with eager spring :
Thence we have journeyed out to the blue hills round,
The pilgrims of a day's enchanted ground,

And where we'd seen the crow or heron fly
Have made our foreign way, passed far inns by,
On edge of lily ponds have heard the jack
From unknown holes leap and shrunk trembling back,
Have seen strange chimney's smoke, new runnels foam,
Until quite surfeited we turned for home,
Whose white walls rosy with the westering light
Still of our journey seemed the noblest sight.

Thence, too, when high wind through the black clouds
pouring
Bowing the strong trees' creaking joints went roaring.
Adventure was to splash through the sightless lane
When church bells filled a pause of wind and rain,
And once within the venerable walls
To hear the elms without like waterfalls,
While the cold arches murmured every prayer,
And Advent hymns bade the round world prepare.
Prepare! the next day with pale seas amazed,
We scarce had marvelled as we gaped and gazed,
If this had been the tempest harbinger
Of the world's end and final Arbiter:
The pollards in the yellow torrent drowning,
The weir's huge jaw a-gnashing, all heaven frowning.

But there at length, beside that thunderous weir,
Our lot was cast, and no less generous here
Came each long day; not even the hours we spent
Under the dominie's eye unkindly went.
We found his learning dry, 'tis true, and hit
Disaster in our sleights for leavening it;

But the old desks cut with heroic names,
The gilded panel trumpeting past fames,
Shields, pictures, solemn books of stars and sages
Kindled our pride in sense of mightier ages,
That old school now will never see again.
Fair, fair befall her, though no urchin pen
Crawl through the summer hours beneath her beams,
Nor playground roystering shout bestir her dreams,
Honoured among her aspens may she rise,
And her red walls long soothe the traveller's eyes.
Thence issued we among the scampering crew,
And crossed the green, and from the bridge down threw
Our dinner crumbs to waiting roach ; or soft
Marauding climbed the cobwebbed apple loft,
And the sweet smell of blenheims lapped in straw
Made stolen pleasure seem a natural law ;
Escape and plunder hurried us at last
To the lock cottage where our lot was cast,
Poor as church mice, yet rich at every turn,
Who never guessed that man was made to mourn.

In this same country as the time fulfilled,
When hops like ribbons on the maypole frilled
Their colonnaded props mile after mile,
And tattered armies gathered to the spoil,
We, too, invaders the green arbours ere
The day had glistened on earth's dewy hair,
And through the heat we picked and picked apace,
To fill our half bin and not lose the chace,
While our bin partner, fierce of eye and tongue,
Minded our ways and gave " when I was young " ;

And all about, the clearing setts revealed
The curious colours of the folk afield,
The raven hair, the flamy silk, the blue
Washed purple with all weathers ; crime's dark crew ;
Babes at the breast ; old sailors chewing quids ;
And hyacinth eyes beneath sweet country lids.
The conquest sped, the bramblings, goldings small,
The heavy fuggles to the bins came all,
Garden past garden heard the measurer's horn
Blow truce, advance ! until a chillier morn
Saw the last wain load up with pokes and go,
And an empty, saddened field looked out below
On trees where kindled the quick feverous tinge
Of autumn, and the river's glaucous fringe,
And our own cottage, its far lattice twinkling
Across the tired stubble sown with sheepbells' tinkling ;
On airy wings the warning spirit sighed,
But we, we heard not, thinking of Christmastide.

A love I had, as childhood ever will,
And our first meeting I'll remember still ;
When to the farmhouse first we went, the may
With white and red lit hedgerows all the way,
And there I saw her in a red-may cloak,
To church going by ; so delicate she spoke,
So graceful stept, so innocent-gay was her look,
I took a flower ; she put it in her book,
And after many eves we've walked for hours
Like loving flowers among the other flowers,
And blushed for pride when other girls and boys
Laughed at us sweethearts in the playhour's noise—

Sweethearts, it was a silly simple thing,
And we've gone each our ways this many a spring,
But now to see the child with child primrosing
Is all as sweet as any spring's unclosing.

Vision on vision blooms—long may they bloom,
Through years that bring the philosophic gloom,
Sweetening my sleep with its strange agonies racked
And shedding dew on every parching tract,
In every pleasant place a virtue adding,
A herb of grace to keep the will from madding:
And, happiest village, still I turn to you,
The alabaster box of spikenard, you;
To your knoll trees, your slow canal return,
In your kind farms or cottages sojourn;
Enjoy the whim that on your church tower set
The lead cowl like a Turkish minaret;
Beat all your bounds, record each kiln and shed,
And see the blue mists on each calm close spread.
My day still breaks beyond your poplared East,
And in your pastoral still my life has rest.

PERCH-FISHING

On the far hill the cloud of thunder grew
And sunlight blurred below; but sultry blue
Burned yet on the valley water where it hoards
Behind the miller's elmen floodgate boards,
And there the wasps, that lodge them ill-concealed
In the vole's empty house, still drove afield

To plunder touchwood from old crippled trees
And build their young ones their hutched nurseries;
Still creaked the grasshopper's rasping unison
Nor had the whisper through the tansies run
Nor weather-wisest bird gone home.
How then
Should wry eels in the pebbled shallows ken
Lightning coming? Troubled up they stole
To the deep-shadowed sullen water-hole,
Among whose warty snags the quaint perch lair.
As cunning stole the boys to angle there,
Muffling least tread, with no noise balancing through
The hangdog alder-boughs his bright bamboo.
Down plumbed the shuttled ledger, and the quill
On the quicksilver water lay dead still.

A sharp snatch, swirling to-fro of the line,
He's lost, he's won, with splash and scuffling shine
Past the low-lapping brandy-flowers drawn in,
The ogling hunchback perch with needled fin.
And there beside him one as large as he,
Following his hooked mate, careless who shall see
Or what befall him, close and closer yet—
The startled boy might take him in his net
That folds the other.

Slow, while on the clay
The other flounces, slow he sinks away.
What agony usurps that watery brain
For comradeship of twenty summers slain,

For such delights below the flashing weir
And up the sluice-cut, playing buccaneer
Among the minnows ; lolling in hot sun
When bathing vagabonds had drest and done ;
Rootling in salty flannel-weed for meal
And river shrimps, when hushed the trundling wheel ;
Snapping the dapping moth, and with new wonder
Prowling through old drowned barges falling asunder.
And O a thousand things the whole year through
They did together, never more to do.

THE CHILD'S GRAVE

I CAME to the churchyard where pretty Joy lies
On a morning in April, a rare sunny day ;
Such bloom rose around, and so many birds' cries
That I sang for delight as I followed the way.

I sang for delight in the ripening of spring,
For dandelions even were suns come to earth ;
Not a moment went by but a new lark took wing
To wait on the season with melody's mirth.

Love-making birds were my mates all the road,
And who would wish surer delight for the eye
Than to see goldfinches gleaming abroad
Or yellow-hammers sunning on paling and sty ?

And stocks in the almswomen's garden were blown
With rich Easter roses each side of the door ;
The lazy white owls in the glade cool and lone
Paid calls on their cousins in the elm's chambered core.

This peace, then, and happiness thronged me around.
Nor could I go burdened with grief, but made merry
Till I came to the gate of that overgrown ground
Where scarce once a year sees the priest come to bury.

Over the mounds stood the nettles in pride,
And, where no fine flowers, there kind weeds dared to wave;
It seemed but as yesterday she lay by my side,
And now my dog ate of the grass on her grave.

He licked my hand wondering to see me muse so,
And wished I would lead on the journey or home,
As though not a moment of spring were to go
In brooding; but I stood, if her spirit might come

And tell me her life, since we left her that day
In the white lilied coffin, and rained down our tears;
But the grave held no answer, though long I should stay;
How strange that this clay should mingle with hers!

So I called my good dog, and went on my way;
Joy's spirit shone then in each flower I went by,
And clear as the noon, in coppice and ley,
Her sweet dawning smile and her violet eye!

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

THE PLOUGHMAN

Under the long fell's stony eaves
The ploughman, going up and down,
Ridge after ridge man's tide-mark leaves,
And turns the hard grey soil to brown.

Striding, he measures out the earth
In lines of life, to rain and sun;
And every year that comes to birth
Sees him still striding on and on.

The seasons change, and then return;
Yet still, in blind, unsparing ways,
However I may shrink or yearn,
The ploughman measures out my days.

His acre brought forth roots last year;
This year it bears the gleamy grain;
Next Spring shall seedling grass appear;
Then roots and corn and grass again.

Five times the young corn's pallid green
I have seen spread and change and thrill;
Five times the reapers I have seen
Go creeping up the far-off hill:

And, as the unknowing ploughman climbs
Slowly and inveterately,
I wonder long how many times
The corn will spring again for me.

BABEL: THE GATE OF GOD

Lost towers impend, copeless primeval props
Of the new threatening sky, and first rude digits
Of awe remonstrance and uneasy power
Thrust out by man when speech sank back in his throat:
Then had the last rocks ended bubbling up
And rhythms of change within the heart begun
By a blind need that would make springs and winters;
Pylons and monoliths went on by ages,
Mycenæ and Great Zimbabwe came about;
Cowed hearts in This conceived a pyramid
That leaned to hold itself upright, a thing
Foredoomed to limits, death and an easy apex;
Then postulants for the stars' previous wisdom
Standing on Carthage must get nearer still;
While in Chaldea an altitude of God
Being mooted, and a Saurian unearthed
Upon a mountain stirring a surmise
Of floods and alterations of the sea,
A round-walled tower must rise upon Senaar
Temple and escape to God the ascertained.
These are decayed like Time's teeth in his mouth,
Black cavities and gaps, yet earth is darkened
By their deep-sunken and unfounded shadows
And memories of man's earliest theme of towers.

Space—the old source of time—should be undone,
Eternity defined, by men who trusted
Another tier would equal them with God.

A city of grimed brick-kilns, squat truncations,
Hunched like spread toads yet high beneath their circles
Of low packed smoke, assemblages of thunder
That glowed upon their under sides by night
And lit like storm small shadowless workmen's toil.
Meaningless stumps, unturned bare roots, remained
In fields of marshy mud and trampled leaves,
While, if a horse died hauling, plasterers
Knelt on a plank to clip its sweaty coat. . . .
A builder leans across the last wide courses ;
His unadjustable unreaching eyes
Fail under him before his glances sink
On the clouds' upper layers of sooty curls
Where some long lightning goes like swallows downward,
But at the wider gallery next below
Recognise master masons with pricked parchments :
That builder then, as one who condescends
Unto the sea and all that is beneath him,
His hairy breast on the wet mortar calls
" How many fathoms is it yet to Heaven ? "
On the next eminence the orgulous King
Nimroud stands up conceiving he shall live
To conquer God, now that he knows where God is :
His eager hands push up the tower in thought . . .
Again, his shaggy inhuman height strides down
Among the carpenters because he has seen
One shape an eagle-woman on a door-post :
He drives his spear-beam through him for wasted day.

Little men hurrying, running here and there,
Within the dark and stifling walls, dissent

From every sound, and shoulder empty hods ;
" The God's great altar should stand in the crypt
Among our earth's foundations "—" The God's great altar
Must be the last far coping of our work "—
" It should inaugurate the broad main stair "—
" Or end it "—" It must stand toward the East ! "
But here a grave contemptuous youth cries out
" Womanish babblers, how can we build God's altar
Ere we divine its foreordained true shape ? "
Then one " It is a pedestal for deeds "—
" 'Tis more and should be hewn like the King's brow "—
" It has the nature of a woman's bosom "—
" The tortoise, first created, signifies it "—
" A blind and rudimentary navel shows
The source of worship better than horned moons."
Then a lean giant " Is not a calyx needful ? "—
" Because round grapes or statues well expressed
Become the nadir of incense, nodal lamps,
Yet apes have hands that but and carved red crystals "—
" Birds molten, touchly talc veins bronze buds crumble
Ablid ublai ghan isz rad eighar ghaurl. . . ."
Words said too often seemed such ancient sounds
That men forget them or were lost in them ;
The guttural glottis-chasms of language reached
A rhythm, a gasp, were curves of immortal thought.

Man with his bricks was building, building yet,
Where dawn and midnight mingled and woke no birds,
In the last courses, building past his knowledge
A wall that swung—for towers can have no tops,

No chord can mete the universal segment,
Earth has no basis. Yet the yielding sky,
Invincible vacancy, was there discovered—
Though piled-up bricks should pulp the sappy balks,
Weight generate a secrecy of heat,
Cankerous charring, crevices' fronds of flame.

THE END OF THE WORLD

The snow had fallen many nights and days;
The sky was come upon the earth at last,
Sifting thinly down as endlessly
As though within the system of blind planets
Something had been forgot or overdriven.
The dawn now seemed neglected in the grey
Where mountains were unbuilt and shadowless trees
Rootlessly paused or hung upon the air.
There was no wind, but now and then a sigh
Crossed that dry falling and drifted it
Through crevices of slate and door and casement.
Perhaps the new moon's time was even past.
Outside, the first white twilights were too void
Until a sheep called once, as to a lamb,
And tenderness crept everywhere from it;
But now the flock must have strayed far away.
The lights across the valley must be veiled,
The smoke lost in the greyness or the dusk.
For more than three days now the snow had thatched
That cow-house roof where it had ever melted
With yellow stains from the beasts' breath inside;

But yet a dog howled there, though not quite lately.
Someone passed down the valley swift and singing,
Yes, with locks spreaded like a son of morning ;
But if he seemed too tall to be a man
It was that men had been so long unseen,
Or shapes loom larger through a moving snow.
And he was gone and food had not been given him.
When snow slid from an overweighted leaf
Shaking the tree, it might have been a bird
Slipping in sleep or shelter, whirring wings ;
Yet never bird fell out, save once a dead one—
And in two days the snow had covered it.
The dog had howled again—or thus it seemed
Until a lean fox passed and cried no more.
All was so safe indoors where life went on
Glad of the close enfolding snow—O glad
To be so safe and secret at its heart,
Watching the strangeness of familiar things.
They knew not what dim hours went on, went by,
For while they slept the clock stopt newly wound
As the cold hardened. Once they watched the road,
Thinking to be remembered. Once they doubted
If they had kept the sequence of the days,
Because they heard not any sound of bells.
A butterfly, that hid until the spring
Under a ceiling's shadow, dropt, was dead.
The coldness seemed more nigh, the coldness deepened
As a sound deepens into silences ;
It was of earth and came not by the air ;
The earth was cooling and drew down the sky.
The air was crumbling. There was no more sky.

Rails of a broken bed charred in the grate,
And when he touched the bars he thought the sting
Came from their heat—he could not feel such cold. . . .
She said " O do not sleep,
Heart, heart of mine, keep near me. No, no ; sleep.
I will not lift his fallen, quiet eyelids,
Although I know he would awaken then—
He closed them thus but now of his own will.
He can stay with me while I do not lift them."

ATLANTIS

WHAT poets sang in Atlantis ? Who can tell
The epics of Atlantis or their names ?
The sea hath its own murmurs, and sounds not
The secrets of its silences beneath,
And knows not any cadences enfolded
When the last bubbles of Atlantis broke
Among the quieting of its heaving floor.

O, years and tides and leagues and all their billows
Can alter not man's knowledge of men's hearts—
While trees and rocks and clouds include our being
We know the epics of Atlantis still :
A hero gave himself to lesser men,
Who first misunderstood and murdered him,
And then misunderstood and worshipped him ;
A woman was lovely and men fought for her,
Towns burnt for her, and men put men in bondage,
But she put lengthier bondage on them all ;

A wanderer toiled among all the isles
That fleck this turning star or shifting sea,
Or lonely purgatories of the mind,
In longing for his home or his lost love.

Poetry is founded on the hearts of men:
Though in Nirvana or the Heavenly courts
The principle of beauty shall persist,
Its body of poetry, as the body of man,
Is but a terrene form, a terrene use,
That swifter being will not loiter with;
And, when mankind is dead and the world cold,
Poetry's immortality will pass.

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1913

O, CARTMEL bells ring soft to-night,
  And Cartmel bells ring clear,
But I lie far away to-night,
  Listening with my dear;

Listening in a frosty land
  Where all the bells are still
And the small-windowed bell-towers stand
  Dark under heath and hill.

I thought that, with each dying year,
  As long as life should last
The bells of Cartmel I should hear
  Ring out an aged past:

The plunging, mingling sounds increase
  Darkness's depth and height,
The hollow valley gains more peace
  And ancientness to-night :

The loveliness, the fruitfulness,
  The power of life lived there
Return, revive, more closely press
  Upon that midnight air.

But many deaths have place in men
  Before they come to die ;
Joys must be used and spent, and then
  Abandoned and passed by.

Earth is not ours ; no cherished space
  Can hold us from life's flow,
That bears us thither and thence by ways
  We knew not we should go.

O, Cartmel bells ring loud, ring clear,
  Through midnight deep and hoar,
A year new-born, and I shall hear
  The Cartmel bells no more.

TO IRON-FOUNDERS AND OTHERS

When you destroy a blade of grass
  You poison England at her roots :
Remember no man's foot can pass
  Where evermore no green life shoots.

You force the birds to wing too high
  Where your unnatural vapours creep :
Surely the living rocks shall die
  When birds no rightful distance keep.

You have brought down the firmament
  And yet no heaven is more near ;
You shape huge deeds without event,
  And half made men believe and fear.

Your worship is your furnaces,
  Which, like old idols, lost obscenes,
Have molten bowels ; your vision is
  Machines for making more machines.

O, you are buried in the night,
  Preparing destinies of rust ;
Iron misused must turn to blight
  And dwindle to a tettered crust.

The grass, forerunner of life, has gone,
  But plants that spring in ruins and shards
Attend until your dream is done :
  I have seen hemlock in your yards.

The generations of the worm
  Know not your loads piled on their toil ;
Their knotted ganglions shall wax firm
  Till your strong flagstones heave and toil.

When the old hollowed earth is cracked,
  And when, to grasp more power and feasts,
Its ores are emptied, wasted, lacked,
  The middens of your burning beasts

Shall be raked over till they yield
  Last priceless slags for fashionings high,
Ploughs to make grass in every field,
  Chisels men's hands to magnify.

FREDERICK V. BRANFORD

SECRET TREATIES

We thought to find a cross like Calvary's,
And queened proud England with a diadem
Of thorns. Impetuous armies clamouring
For war, from the far utterance of the seas
We sprang, to win a new Jerusalem.
Now is our shame, for we have seen you fling
Full-sounding honour from your lips like phlegm
And bargain up our soul in felonies.

O England, it were better men should read,
In dusty chronicles, of how a death
Had found thee in the van of these crusades;
To tell their eager sons with bated breath,
And burning eyes, about a golden deed,
A vanished race, and high immortal Shades.

NIGHT FLYING

Aloft on footless levels of the night
A pilot thunders through the desolate stars,
Sees in the misty deep a fainting light
Of far-off cities cast in coal-dark bars
Of shore and soundless sea; and he is lone,
Snatched from the universe like one forbid,
Or like a ghost caught from the clay and thrown
Out on the void, nor God cared what he did.

Till from these unlinked whisperers that pain
The buried earth he swings his boat away,
Even as a lonely thinker who hath run
The gamut of great lore, and found the Inane,
Then stumbles at midnight upon a sun
And all the honour of a mighty day.

OVER THE DEAD

Who in the splendour of a simple thought,
Whether for England or her enemies,
Went in the night, and in the morning died;
Each bleeding piece of human earth that lies
Stark to the carrion wind, and groaning cries
For burial—each Jesu crucified—
Hath surely won the thing He dearly bought;
For wrong is right when wrong is greatly wrought.

Yet is the Nazarene no thane of Thor,
To play on partial fields the puppet king,
Bearing the battle down with bloody hand.
Serene He stands, above the gods of war,
A naked man where shells go thundering—
The great unchallenged Lord of No-Man's Land.

THE DÆMON

Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat,
All the dark years I never heard that
Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.

When I stood
In the black wood
Apart,
Where the swarm
Of devils storm
With a worm
In my heart.
Pit-a-pat.
I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat,
Twenty-three winters,
All icicle splinters.
Twenty-three springs,
All green ghast stings.
Twenty-three autumns
Twirled like teetotums,
Twenty-three summers,
Mouthing like mummers,
Hustled and hurled,
World within world.
Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
All the dark years I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
At dead midnight,
Like the spirit of fright
When I stood on the brink
Of Hell—I think
I should have gone mad
If not for the glad,

Soft silence of that
Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.

The protean churl,
Like a passionate girl,
Came to the tip
Of my heart with a lip
So slight, that it seemed
As though I had dreamed.
Then away fled he
Into mystery.
Pit-a-pat.
Two dark years I never heard that.

Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
Yester year I again heard that,
Louder and longer,
Prouder and stronger
He came, with the beat
Of storms in his feet;
Came with the flash
Of lightning, the crash
Of planets under
Shattering thunder.
I felt the dart
Of his tongue to my heart,
The flaming bands
Of his iron hands
Tearing the ghost
Of my will from his post.

He slaked me my drouth
In the wine of his mouth,
Flooding a red
Foam through my head,
So that I stood,
Like a man made of blood
In a drunken daze,
Singing his praise.

Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.
Yester-night I again heard that,
Clear and sure.
I flung the door.
In trod
The God.

He held a glass
Where all time was.
He took the sands
In his hands,
And let them pour
Upon the floor.
He bid me tell
Them as they fell.

I counted once,
I counted twice;
He said, "O dunce,
Count thou them thrice."

In a trice
I counted thrice
As the sand
Slipped through his hand;
I counted seven separate times
The sands in seven separate rhymes.
But how often I might count
I always made a strange amount,
For the sands would always run
Out of numbers into None.

Then he caught a million miles
And set them on the floor in piles,
And he caught a million others
And set them down beside their brothers;
He took so many million more
That all space lay on the floor.

He bid me tell the miles, but I,
Howsoever I might try,
Found, as I had found before,
Always Nothing on the floor.

Then he took a million men,
A million others, and again
Million upon million hurled,
Till all the nations of the world
Were in my little chamber, even
All the denizens of heaven.
Thus he laboured to rehearse
The pageant of the Universe,

And ever at each total beauty
He bid me do my ghastly duty.
But howsoever I might count,
I always made that strange amount,
Till I heard the Dæmon cry,
" The whole is here, and it is I."

Then I looked long, long at him,
Till I grew faint and very dim.
And I saw to my surprise
My spirit standing in his eyes.
And I saw a symbol sit,
Awful, on the head of it.
I saw a dread, unspoken truth
(Dare I say it, in my youth,
When I have yet some days perchance
To mingle with earth's circumstance ?).
I saw—I saw—O God !—I saw
(Speak it low with holy awe,
Speak it difficult and dark,
Lest the sons of Adam hark)
That I, two thousand years, had worn
On Calvary, the Crown of Thorn.

RUPERT BROOKE

Born 1887

Died at Lemnos 1915

SONNET

Oh, Death will find me, long before I tire
Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
Into the shade and loneliness and mire
Of the last land! There, waiting patiently,

One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,
See a slow light across the Stygian tide,
And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing,
And tremble. And *I* shall know that you have died,

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam—
Most individual and bewildering ghost!—

And turn, and toss your brown delightful head
Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

THE TREASURE

When colour goes home into the eyes,
And lights that shine are shut again,
With dancing girls and sweet birds' cries
Behind the gateway of the brain;
And that no-place, which gave them birth, shall close
The rainbow and the rose:—

Still may Time hold some golden space
Where I'll unpack that scented store
Of song and flower and sky and face,
And count, and touch, and turn them o'er,
Musing upon them; as a mother, who
Has watched her children all the rich day through,
Sits, quiet-handed, in the fading light,
When children sleep, ere night.

August, 1914.

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,

The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable godhead of delight?
Love is a flame:—we have beaconed the world's night.
A city:—and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence.
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;

And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers ;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon ;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble ; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets ; grainy wood ; live hair that is
Shining and free ; blue-massing clouds ; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine ;
The benison of hot water ; furs to touch ;
The good smell of old clothes ; and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .
Dear names,
And thousand other throng to me ! Royal flames ;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring ;
Holes in the ground ; and voices that do sing ;
Voices in laughter, too ; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace ; and the deep-panting train ;
Firm sands ; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home ;
And washen stones, gay for an hour ; the cold
Graveness of iron ; moist black earthen mould ;
Sleep ; and high places ; footprints in the dew ;
And oaks ; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new ;
And new-peeled sticks ; and shining pools on grass ;—
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,

Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramental covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again ; and make
New friends, now strangers. . . .
But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give : that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far removed,
Praise you, " All these were lovely " ; say, " He loved."

CLOUDS

Down the blue night the unending columns press
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,
Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow
Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.
Some pause in their grave wandering comradeless,
And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,
As who would pray good for the world, but know
Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain
Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.

I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,
In wise majestic melancholy train,
And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,
And men, coming and going on the earth.

The Pacific.

THE OLD VICARAGE GRANTCHESTER

Café des Westens, Berlin

Just now the lilac is in bloom,
All before my little room ;
And in my flower-beds, I think,
Smile the carnation and the pink ;
And down the borders, well I know,
The poppy and the pansy blow. . . .
Oh ! there the chestnuts, summer through
Beside the river make for you
A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep
Deeply above ; and green and deep
The stream mysterious glides beneath,
Green as a dream and deep as death.—
Oh, damn ! I know it ! and I know
How the May fields all golden show,
And when the day is young and sweet,
Gild gloriously the bare feet
That run to bathe . . .
Du lieber Gott !
Here am I, sweating, sick and hot,

And there the shadowed waters fresh
Lean up to embrace the naked flesh.
Temperamentvoll German Jews
Drink beer around; and *there* the dews
Are soft beneath a morn of gold.
Here tulips bloom as they are told;
Unkempt about those hedges blows
An English unofficial rose;
And there the unregulated sun
Slopes down to rest when day is done,
And wakes a vague unpunctual star,
A slippered Hesper; and there are
Meads towards Haslingfield and Cotton
Where *das Betreten's* not *verboten*.

εἴθε γενοιμην . . . would I were
In Grantchester, in Grantchester!
Some, it may be, can get in touch
With Nature there, or Earth, or such.
And clever modern men have seen
A Faun a-peeping through the green,
And felt the Classics were not dead,
To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head,
Or hear the Goat-foot piping low. . . .
But these are things I do not know.
I only know that you may lie
Day long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower-lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,
Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester. . . .

Still in the dawnlit waters cool
His ghostly Lordship swims his pool,
And tries the strokes, essays the tricks,
Long learnt on Hellespont, or Styx;
Dan Chaucer hears his river still
Chatter beneath a phantom mill;
Tennyson notes, with studious eye,
How Cambridge waters hurry by. . . .
And in that garden, black and white,
Creep whispers through the grass all night;
And spectral dance, before the dawn,
A hundred Vicars down the lawn;
Curates, long dust, will come and go
On lissom, clerical, printless toe;
And oft between the boughs is seen
The sly shade of a Rural Dean . . .
Till, at a shiver in the skies,
Vanishing with Satanic cries,
The prim ecclesiastical rout
Leaves but a startled sleeper-out,
Great heavens, the first bird's drowsy calls,
The falling house that never falls.

. . . . . .

God! I will pack, and take a train,
And get me to England once again.
For England's the one land, I know,
Where men with Splendid Hearts may go;
And Cambridgeshire, of all England,
The shire for Men who Understand;
And of *that* district I prefer
The lovely hamlet Grantchester.

For Cambridge people rarely smile,
Being urban, squat, and packed with guile ;
And Royston men in the far South
Are black and fierce and strange of mouth ;
At Over they fling oaths at one,
And worse than oaths at Trumpington,
And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,
And there's none in Harston under thirty,
And folks in Shelford and those parts
Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,
And Barton men make cockney rhymes,
And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe
At Madingley on Christmas Eve.
Strong men have run for miles and miles
When one from Cherry Hinton smiles ;
Strong men have blanched and shot their wives
Rather than send them to St. Ives ;
Strong men have cried like babes, bydam,
To hear what happened at Babraham.
But Grantchester, ah, Grantchester !
There's peace and holy quiet there,
Great clouds along pacific skies,
And men and women with straight eyes,
Lithe children lovelier than a dream,
A bosky wood, a slumberous stream,
And little kindly winds that creep
Round twilight corners, half asleep.
In Grantchester their skins are white,
They bathe by day, they bathe by night ;
The women there do all they ought ;

The men observe the Rules of Thought.
They love the Good ; they worship Truth ;
They laugh uproariously in youth ;
(And when they get to feeling old,
They up and shoot themselves, I'm told). . . .

Ah God ! to see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester !
To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten
Unforgettable, unforgotten
River smell, and hear the breeze
Sobbing in the little trees.
Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand,
Still guardians of that holy land ?
The chestnuts, shade in reverend dream
The yet unacademic stream ?
Is dawn a secret shy and cold
Anadyomene, silver-gold ?
And sunset still a golden sea
From Haslingfield to Madingley ?
And after, ere the night is born,
Do hares come out about the corn ?
Oh, is the water sweet and cool,
Gentle and brown, above the pool ?
And laughs the immortal river still—
Under the mill, under the mill ?
Say, is there Beauty yet to find ?
And certainty ? and Quiet kind ?
Deep-meadows yet, for to forget
The lies, and truths, and pain ? . . . oh, yet
Stands the church clock at ten to three ?
And is there honey still for tea ?

THE BUSY HEART

Now that we've done our best and worst, and parted,
I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.
(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end;
Women with child, content; and old men sleeping;
And wet strong ploughlands, scarred for certain grain;
And babes that weep, and so forget their weeping;
And the young heavens, forgetful after rain;
And evening hush, broken by homing wings;
And Song's nobility, and Wisdom holy,
That live, we dead. I would think of a thousand things,
Lovely and loveable, and taste them slowly,
One after one, like tasting a sweet food.
I have need to busy my heart with quietude.

DINING-ROOM TEA

When you were there, and you, and you,
Happiness crowned the night; I too,
Laughing and looking, one of all,
I watched the quivering lamplight fall
On plate and flowers and pouring tea
And cup and cloth; and they and we
Flung all the dancing moments by
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,
Improvident, unmemoried;

And fitfully and like a flame
The light of laughter went and came.
Proud in their careless transience moved
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked upon your innocence;
For lifted clear and still and strange
From the dark woven flow of change
Under a vast and starless sky
I saw the immortal moment lie.
One instant I, an instant, knew
As God knows all. And it and you
I, above Time, oh, blind! could see
In witless immortality.
I saw the marble cup; the tea,
Hung on the air, an amber stream;
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,
The painted flame, the frozen smoke.
No more the flooding lamplight broke
On flying eyes and lips and hair;
But lay, but slept unbroken there,
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,
And words on which no silence grew.
Light was more alive than you.

For suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked on your magnificence.
I saw the stillness and the light,
And you, august, immortal, white,

Holy and strange ; and every glint
Posture and jest and thought and tint
Freed from the mask of transiency,
Triumphant in eternity,
Immote, immortal.
Dazed at length
Human eyes grew, mortal strength
Wearied ; and Time began to creep.
Change closed about me like a sleep.
Light glinted on the eyes I loved.
The cup was filled. The bodies moved.
The drifting petal came to ground.
The laughter chimed its perfect round.
The broken syllable was ended.
And I, so certain and so friended,
How could I cloud, or how distress
The heaven of your unconsciousness ?
Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,
Stammering of lights unutterable
The eternal holiness of you,
The timeless end, you never knew,
The peace that lay, the light that shone.
You never knew that I had gone
A million miles away, and stayed
A million years. The laughter played
Unbroken round me ; and the jest
Flashed on. And we that knew the best
Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.
I sang at heart, and talked, and eat,
And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,
When you were there, and you, and you.

FRANCIS BURROWS

THE PRAYER TO DEMETER

Mother whose hair I grasp, whose bosom I tread,
Thy son adopted. Thou who dost so charm me
And in my lappels of affection warm me,
Heap all thine other misery on my head;

Madness alone of evils do I dread,
Against its imminent presence guard and arm me,
Suffer its broad flung shadow not to harm me
But plunge me rather with the naked dead.

Yet if it must come, let it be entire;
Cast then upon me unillumined night,
One whole eclipse not knowing any fire
To give it record of the former light.
Complete destruction of the heart's desire,
A ruin of thought and audience and sight.

THE GIANT'S DIRGE

Remember him who battled here,
What was his living character?
To friends an heart for ever filled
With love and with compassion brave;
To foes a power never stilled
In pushing vengeance to the grave;
Where is his spirit gone now, O where?

What of his ten grand paces here
Whose motion was a perfect sphere ?
To friends a making unafraid,
  A sure defence, a wall of glass ;
To foes a hidden trap well laid
  To catch them stalking through the grass ;
Where is he walking now, O where ?

What of his power who is here
Enclosed within the sepulchre ?
To friends an eager sword of joy,
  A shield to nestle underneath ;
To foes whose love is to destroy,
  A stumbling block, a hidden death ;
Where is his power gone now, O where ?

What of his eye that floated here
Like sky-born dewy gossamer ?
To friends the ever-sought desire,
  The hope achieved, the loving cup ;
To foes an unassaulted fire,
  A furnace withering them up.
Where is he shining now, O where ?

What of the head that breathed so here
And the hair beloved so, is it sere ?
To friends a shadow shedding stars,
  Like blessings, from the upper deep ;
To foes a poisoned tree that mars
  Men's lives thereunder laid asleep.
Where does it blossom now, O where ?

He lives, is living everywhere,
Where human hearts are, he is there.
To friends a soul of certainty
  That love though lost is more than none;
To foes an inability
  To say, "We slew him, we alone,
His soul is here, we slew him here."

THE UNFORGOTTEN

There is a cave beneath the throne of grace
Where these have honoured and remembered place;
Strong hairy men, huge-jawed, with wiry limbs,
Half hid in mist, the heroes of old times.
They lie among the pots and flints and beads
Their friends once buried with them as the needs
Of the after-life, to hunt with and to slay with,
And flay and cook, or in repose to play with.
Here he who shaped the flint and bound to axe
And arrow first; who made the thread of flax
And hemp to weave; and he who to the plough
Harnessed and tamed the bull and milked the cow;
Who taught to bake and grind and till the seed
Of corn sufficient for the future's need;
And he who said: "These are my children, these;
My blood between them and their enemies;
For when I age and cannot win my meat,
They shall become new head and hands and feet";
And he who said: "Let none of our tribe die
Slain by ourselves with violence. For why,

Our foes are plentiful, our friends are few,
Our living scarce. All may have work to do,
As hunting, warring, digging for the strong,
Or potting, cooking, weaving for the young,
The old, the weak, yet for adornment skilled "—
Too early born and by his brethren killed.
Here he who dreamed a strange dream in the night,
And from his rushes springing swat with fright,
But thought and said with opened eyes, " 'Tis beauty,"
And terror left him. Those who spoke of duty,
Mercy and truth, and taught the undying soul,
And many more. And many a grunt and growl
They give in friendly dreams ; when haunches quiver
And nostrils widen, and hands do twitch and shiver.
And often one awakes, and blinds, half speaks,
And yawns and licks and blows upon his cheeks :

Pure spirits laugh, and with a kindly eye
The father views their rough-haired majesty.

THE WELL

See this splashing fount enshrined,
Some ancient people roofed and lined ;
Some memory here of a forlorn rime,
A thought, a breath of a thought sublime,
A sobbing under the wings of time.

See the ancient people's grave :
No Andromache, no slave

Water here for a master draws,
No slaves longer laugh and pause,
All's strange language and new laws.

O words, be good to impart assurance
Of hope, of memory, of endurance,
O flourish grass upon our tomb,
Grant us, sunk in a little room,
Both a sepulchre and home.

EGYPTIAN

The pyramid is built, is built,
And stone by stone the sphinx;
Upon the ground the wine is spilt,
And deep the builder drinks.
Deeply the wise man in the desert thinks.

Hark to the lanterned gondolas!
The stream is incense-calmed;
We smoke, we draw the gods with praise,
They walk amongst us charmed.
Cries: "*Never are the desert-sands disarmed.*"

Our building toil is done, is done,
All strifes and quarrels cease;
And slaves and masters are at one,
And enemies at peace.
Cries: "*Yet the sands are stirred and wars increase.*"

Riches and joy and thankfulness
  By our rich river are ;
To see our noble work and bless
  Shall travellers come afar.
Cries : " *Yes, a few, but many more for war.*"

LIFE

When I consider this, that bare
Water and earth and common air
Combine together to compose
A being who breathes and stands and goes,
With eyes to see the sun, with brain
To contemplate his origin,
I marvel not at death and pain
But rather how he should have been.

A. Y. CAMPBELL

ANIMULA VAGULA

Night stirs but wakens not, her breathings climb
To one slow sigh; the strokes of many twelves
From unseen spires mechanically chime,
Mingling like echoes, to frustrate themselves;
My soul, remember Time.

The tones like smoke into the stillness curl,
The slippered hours their placid business ply,
And in thy hand there lies occasions' pearl;
But thou art playing with it absently
And dreaming, like a girl.

A BIRD

His haunts are by the brackish ways
Where rivers and sea-currents meet;
He is familiar with the sprays,
Over the stones his flight is fleet.

Low, low he flutters, like a rat
That scampers up a river-bank;
Swift, lizard-like, he scours the flat
Where pools are wersh and weeds are dank.

The fresh green smell of inland groves,
The pureness of the upper air,
Are poorer than his pungent coves
That hold strange spices everywhere.

Strong is the salt of open sea;
Far out, the virgin brine is keen:
No home is there for such as he,
Out of the beach he is not seen.

By shallows and capricious foams
Are the queer corners he frequents,
And in an idle humour roams
The borderland of elements.

THE DROMEDARY

In dreams I see the Dromedary still,
As once in a gay park I saw him stand:
A thousand eyes in vulgar wonder scanned
His humps and hairy neck, and gazed their fill
At his lank shanks and mocked with laughter shrill.
He never moved: and if his Eastern land
Flashed on his eye with stretches of hot sand,
It wrung no mute appeal from his proud will.
He blinked upon the rabble lazily;
And still some trace of majesty forlorn

And a coarse grace remained: his head was high,
Though his gaunt flanks with a great mange were worn:
There was not any yearning in his eye,
But on his lips and nostril infinite scorn.

THE PANIC

Pale in her evening silks she sat
That but a week had been my bride;
Then, while the stars we wondered at,
Without a word she left my side;
Devious and silent as a bat,
I watched her round the garden glide.

Soon o'er the moonlit lawn she streamed,
Then floated idly down the glade;
Now like a forest nymph she seemed,
Now like a light within a shade;
She turned, and for a moment gleamed,
And suddenly I saw her fade.

I had been held in trancèd stare
Till she had vanished from my sight;
Then did I start in wild despair,
And followed fast in mad affright;
What if herself a spirit were
And had so soon rejoined the night?

A. Y. Campbell

SOLUS HYPERBOREAS

(May, 1915)

Ode to a pocket edition of Virgil in the possession of D. G. Lillie, biologist to the British Antarctic Expedition, 1910.

(Note.—The volcano Erebus was within sight of the base camp.)

MUCH-TRAVELLED, curious book, I write this reverent ode
To celebrate thy fame, and praise thy loving carrier;
That thou wast Virgil, always a most precious load,
Now doubly wonderful, secure in safe abode,
First of all Virgils to have reached the Great Ice Barrier.

There, like thine Orpheus, didst thou the lone realm enchant,
Thrilling eternal snows with song unprecedented;
There saw'st an Erebus more grim and gaunt
Than that whose gloomy king
Wept and relented,
Hearing but once the Thracian minstrel sing,
And the remorseless powers of sightless Death repented.
A desert even for shades too bare
Was that thy presence graced,
Pinnacled with a skyey gorge
That fumes like the Sicilian forge—

But what man's bleak imagination dare
With snowy Cyclops haunt the inhuman waste,
Or in that frost-bound Ætna dream some Typhon's lair?

Yet 'twere a grievous error
To think that here no forms are seen or heard.
The subtle force of Life is not so soon deterred,
And even the glittering shores of Erebus and Terror,
Untenanted and rigid as they seem,
Harbour a countless herd
Of beast, fish, bird, that their own shelters mock
Or lurk in blinding gleam;
And silver sea, white landscape, and black rock
With undetected animation teem.
Nor is a land for half the year benighted,
A trackless and immeasurable wold
By marrow-piercing cold
And barrenness so desperately blighted
But thou didst there behold
Creatures in which thy lord would have delighted—
Nay, which his inward vision long ago had sighted.

Thou didst see Proteus there, and his amphibious flock
Of soft-eyed seals disporting on the beach,
Either lumbering along from rock to rock,
Or blissfully rotating each
In his particular marble dock,
Or in its brittle walls laborious channels hollowing.
Thou didst see Phorcus and his playful following
Of huge cetaceans
Riding along the waves, tumbling and wallowing,

And tracedſt their luxurious gyrations
By their high-snorted fountains.
Thou haſt seen penguins, too, their populous nations
Blackening the diſtant mountains,
Or near at hand haſt watched their congregations
Flickering with movement, filled with clamours raucous,
Or thou haſt heard a small loquacious knot
On icy crag some raid or rapine plot
In squabbling conclave or intriguing caucus.
And thou mayſt even have snatched, in some remoter spot
Like a sea-lion couchant in ſtalactite grot,
A fleeting glimpse of Glaucus.

But fitly to rehearse
And with full circumſtance unfold each miracle
Were difficult in this exacting verse
And far too long a task for measures lyrical.
Nay, it would need thy maſter's happy skill,
And a fifth Georgic fill,
In some such playful-epic vein
And in such human image to describe
With grandiose-tender ſtrain
The wondrous commune of the penguin tribe.
The civil code which they from birth imbibe,
Their ritual, faſts, and games,
" A world in little, yet a vision rare," [1]
Their hymeneal bliss, which our own conduct shames,
Their inexhauſtible parental care,

[1] *Georg.*, iv. 3 : " Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum."

And all the complex laws of their small lives,
His were the mind most proper to declare
Who voiced the marvels of our humble hives,
And the minute society of bees laid bare.

All Nature's works he saw
With wonder, love, and awe,
And might have used his humour mixed with pity
To illuminate and draw
The charm and pathos of that Polar city,
And those quaint colonists of ice and wave,
Who, in a world with circling perils rife,
Their pygmy species to eternise, brave
The elements themselves in constant strife,
And mid perpetual cold preserve the fire of life.

But thou henceforth shalt tell a double tale :
One, of that patriarchal navigator
Who from the flames of Pergamum set sail,
Destined old wonders of the deep to probe ;
This shall men read in the familiar lines
Of which thou art the small perpetuator.
But thou hast other speaking signs
In blots and blurs that stain thy weathered robe,
Whether of sportive baptism at the Equator,
Or caught in some Antarctic gale
Where seas, unreined by continents, roll round the globe.
And in these characters the skilled translator
May read another tale
Rich in romance no less, vaster in scale ;

A voyage of enterprise heroic,
As full of purpose high,
Labour indomitable, and courage Stoic,
And no less sure than that, of immortality.

So, when thy future readers shall discover
How, in that hospitable land,
His first long phase of storm and struggle over,
The weather-beaten Trojan scanned,
Far from his ancient home, in their outlandish art,
Scenes of old war, and sad imperishable glories;
The vision stirred his heart,
He cried: "Here, too, are tears; here, too, compassion"—
Then shall they pause, and fashion
Another story's deathless record to thy story's,
And their proud hearts shall beat,
While they with reverence the great line repeat,
Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

Yes, regions where no conquering Roman ever stepped
To man's invincibility redound;
Where, in white leagues of snowdrift blizzard-swept,
A solitary mound
Through the long Polar nights unvisited,
Where that last sleep they slept,
Commemorates their labours and our loss;
There men once wept;
There too, there tears were shed;
There, symbol of compassion, stands a simple Cross.

Yet not the lands they gained, nor the funereal Pole
They reached, alas too late, their triumph sum;
It was no popular feat that was their goal,
But to make tameless Scythian tracts become
The provinces of Knowledge; to unroll
Nature's Sibylline scroll,
Teach mysteries to speak that had been dumb,
And to promote the bounds of man's imperial soul.

And this was their achievement;
Here they annexed and charted an immense domain,
For their own memories a greater gain,
For us, a better solace in bereavement
Than that priority which they did not attain.
And surely of all men he
Whose art created thee,
If to thy pages he his heart committed,
And truly held that man most fortunate
Who to the secret springs
And causes of all things
Had skill to penetrate,
Would count them to be envied and not pitied.

Happy is he indeed,
Happier than vulgar minds can ever grasp,
Who chose the book of Knowledge to unclasp,
And her high doctrines read;
Filled with a faith more large than any creed
By the harmonious spectacle of Science,

Awed but not cowed,
He finds in Truth alone his light and lead,
And to her service vowed
Bids Superstition, Fear, and Fate, and Death, defiance.

Such faith enjoys the man who treasured thee.
Yet is he doubly blest,
Being dowered in like degree
With what thou dost attest
To have been in Virgil's mind the next felicity.
His devious foot ere now hath pressed
The grassy shrine of many a rural god ;
Of wood-nymphs' arbours he hath been a ranger,
And in Silvanus' precincts trod,
Nor is elusive Pan to him a stranger,
For he loves peace no less than he dares danger.

These are the two ideals at whose leading
He now goes forth, not to destroy, but heal ;
And, because thousands of brave men are bleeding,
To face that death which he would never deal,
All his most cherished labours has relinquished.
May he survive till Europe shall resume
Those noble quests that now have been extinguished,
And that devotion use, which wasteful wars consume.

But thou, henceforth on thy twin laurels rest ;
And let thy thumbed and venerable pages
Stand silent monitors to future ages
Of what alone can make man truly great and blest.

To spread the power of learning, and the light of art,
Further than sage or poet ever dreamed,
To leave not yet unfurled
No corner of Earth's chart,
No nation of her millions unredeemed;
But like that box which dying Douglas hurled
Charged with his cause and his great leader's heart,
Far, far ahead of our own vital span
To fling Regeneration at the world—
This is the glory, this the work, of man;
And of this progress thou, small book, wast in the van.

IN A WARM OCTOBER

Only a memory is the lilac now;
The nightingale not even a memory.
Two months, three months back, did the cuckoo fly;
One month before that took his Trappist vow.
Gone are the swallows even, when? whither? how?
Yet one great rich rose blazes garishly;
And once more crawls the meditative plough;
And still the suns soar cloudless, hot, and high.

Glad though not thrilled I walk, even as the year;
See little, think little, blink, feel the sun.
Birds there may be yet, none I care to hear;
Hopes I may nurse, but would not mention one.
What still is with me, I reflect how dear;
If I have lost some things, their thought I shun.

THERE ARE STILL KINGFISHERS

Faith, peace, and joy to-day brings ; all has failed
I this day put my hand to, well know I ;
Less blind than some so far, though that's not why ;
But with joy, peace, and faith my spirit is mailed,
Since on Wren's bridge at noon, unseen, unhailed,
I, all alone, saw the kingfisher fly.

Not as before, startled by friendly prod,
In stagnant ditch to imagine something quiver,
Lost while half-seen ; but brilliant, clear, and broad,
Forty-two yards up the middle of the river
Under my eyes shot the turquoise unflawed !
Nothing of me that bird knows and will never ;
But I rejoiced, as men rejoice in God,
Not that he cares for them, but lives for ever.

28th APRIL, 1917

Hush, hush, inhuman one ! Haunt moonlit arbours ;
Revel ; ay, love ; but noiseless ; never sing !
Hast thou no sense what heart of listener harbours ?
Oh, is this spring to thee no less than spring ?

I heard thee suddenly ; that ancient impulse
Breathless to hearken, seized me unaware,
Even as I heard of old, and felt the dim pulse
Of Earth speak through thee, and thy bliss could share,

Now, what a pang it brought, the rapture piercing!
Hast thou no heart? Thou, that in years now fled
So sang, that in thy voice we seemed to hear sing
Our hearts—in days before our friends were dead.

How canst thou come again, true to thy season,
Woo, mate, make music, as when spring was joy?
How canst thou sing to us without a reason?
Must thou our dear-bought calm of mind destroy?

We could endure the flowers; though memories tragic
With their soft beauty woke, it lulled our pain.
Thou hast a soul, and with resistless magic
Whisperest of hopes we dare not nurse again.

Till we can hear thee as these blithe new-comers,
Cuckoos and swallows, that make no heart sore,
Cease; for our children there shall still be summers;
Thou'lt sing for them so, though for us no more.

If thou canst feel, then, wait till we are older;
Wiser; to loss resigned; the way less long.
Dreams, and strange hopes that rise, desires grown bolder,
Old mystic thoughts revived, rare glints of song—

These wouldst thou bring us now, but old friends bring not?
Oh, for one year yet, shun thy wonted grove;
Or visit us as thou didst once, but sing not;
Or sing, O nightingale, but not of love.

EXILED FROM THE NIGHTINGALES

Now that soft April steals the voice,
The garb of May, the scented air,
Where last spring saw me men rejoice;
And I rejoice too, though not there.

The lawns I miss, they miss not me,
Their freshness must be still the same;
And in those groves I may not see
Still sings the bird I dare not name.

ON THE BIRTH OF ADRIAN

A CHILD is born, unborn before;
A male child; let the world rejoice.
Leap, town and country, dale and shore;
And thou too, Muse, renew thy voice.

Born is to-day for Man fresh hope,
Born of redemption one more sign;
Born is for all unborn such scope
As none born earlier dares define.

One beast is as another beast;
In dawns if we some difference scan,
The same sun soars in the same East,
But one man is no other man.

Song-birds, the pride of flower and leaf,
  True is their function to its day,
Beautiful is their prime and brief;
  But one man's work shall last for aye.

Sweet is the love of womankind;
  In her pure heart, let empires fall,
One his one sure delight shall find;
  But one man's acts shall profit all.

See ye the lilies of the field?
  They toil not, neither do they spin.
A thing that pen or spear shall wield
  To sweat and rage see here begin.

See ye the lilies of the soil?
  Solomon, girt with bended knees,
Robed in all hues of human toil,
  Was not arrayed like one of these.

But wisdom, justice, knowledge, art,
  Woven into lore that shall not fail,
There lies Creation's human part,
  And stern adornment of the male.

Splendour there is of Intellect;
  It is Man's empire; here alone
Nature, in all her glory decked,
  Weighs not one thought of Solomon.

ON THE THIRD BIRTHDAY OF STELLA

Little, fiery, twinkling thing,
In my heaven I find thee;
Seen but as a glittering,
Yet a world's behind thee.

Ere thou dawnedst, a new star,
How long lurked thy traces?
Sped thy tiny beam how far
Through the heavenly spaces?

New-born wast thou; but how old?
Who, when, wherefore set thee
Where thou must be years untold
Ere our night should get thee?

Not from us two, moon and sun,
Shines thy light dependent;
Thou no planet art, but one
Of the fixed resplendent.

Fondly through refracting hope
I with far conjecture
Scan, as in a telescope,
Thy whole future's picture.

Little, fiery, twinkling thing,
Easier 'twas to find thee
Than from thy shy glittering
Guess what rolls behind thee.

ENVOI

Off, little seeds, on Time's wild gale!
  Small, but well-armoured, light yet strong.
Groan not, as though much chaff you sail;
  In seeds, remember, life sleeps long.

Some but for wind might strike root now;
  Most from the rocks will drink no tears;
Few will arrive, somewhen or how;
  But none yet for a hundred years.

DUDLEY CAREW

THE WANDERER

All things are called to home when day is done
And Mind, the Mother, standing by the door
Calls to her children who have loved the sun
But leave their play and look to him no more.

One only does not answer. One still plays
And climbs the highest boughs of topmost trees,
Sees the funereal panoply of days
And drowns his heart in depths of evening seas.

Heaven has courtiers true to dying kings.
The clouds of sunset fall in his embrace
And fold about his death their golden wings
And no more shall the Mother see one face.

G. K. CHESTERTON

WINE AND WATER

Old Noah he had an ostrich farm and fowls on the largest scale,
He ate his egg with a ladle in an egg-cup big as a pail,
And the soup he took was Elephant Soup and the fish he took was Whale,
But they all were small to the cellar he took when he set out to sail,
And Noah he often said to his wife when he sat down to dine,
"I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine."

The cataract of the cliff of heaven fell blinding off the brink
As if it would wash the stars away as suds go down a sink,
The seven heavens came roaring down for the throats of hell to drink,
And Noah he cocked his eye and said, "It looks like rain, I think,
The water has drowned the Matterhorn as deep as a Mendip mine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine."

But Noah he sinned, and we have sinned; on tipsy feet we trod,
Till a great big black teetotaller was sent to us for a rod,

And you can't get wine at a P.S.A., or chapel, or Eisteddfod,
But the Curse of Water has come again because of the wrath of God,
And water is on the Bishop's board and the Higher Thinker's shrine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine.

THE ROLLING ENGLISH ROAD

Before the Roman came to Rye or out of Severn strode
The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road,
A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the shire,
And after him the parson ran, the sexton and the squire;
A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
The night we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head.

I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;
But I did bash their bagginets because they came arrayed
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,
When you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,
The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.

His sins they were forgiven him; or why do flowers run
Behind him; and the hedges all strengthening in the sun?
The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which was which,
But the wild rose was above him when they found him in the ditch.
God pardon us, nor harden us: we did not see so clear
The night we went to Bannockburn by way of Brighton Pier.

My friends, we will not go again or ape an ancient rage,
Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age,
But walk with clearer eyes and ears this path that wandereth,
And see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death;
But there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

THE SECRET PEOPLE

SMILE at us, pay us, pass us; but do not quite forget,
For we are the people of England, that never has spoken yet.
There is many a fat farmer that drinks less cheerfully,
There is many a free French peasant who is richer and sadder than we.
There are no folk in the whole world so helpless or so wise;
There is hunger in our bellies, there is laughter in our eyes;
You laugh at us and love us, both mugs and eyes are wet:
Only you do not know us. For we have not spoken yet.

The fine French kings came over in a flutter of flags and dames.
We liked their smiles and battles, but we never could say their names.
The blood ran red to Bosworth and the high French lords went down;
There was naught but a naked people under a naked crown.
And the eyes of the King's Servants turned terribly every way,
And the gold of the King's Servants rose higher every day.
They burnt the homes of the shaven men, that had been quaint and kind,
Till there was no bed in a monk's house, nor food that man could find.
The inns of God where no man paid, that were the wall of the weak,
The King's Servants ate them all. And still we did not speak.

And the face of the King's Servants grew greater than the King:
He tricked them, and they trapped him, and stood round him in a ring.
The new grave lords closed round him, that had eaten the abbey's fruits,
And the men of the new religion, with their Bibles in their boots,
We saw their shoulders moving, to menace or discuss,
And some were pure and some were vile; but none took heed of us.

We saw the King as they killed him, and his face was
proud and pale;
And a few men talked of freedom, while England talked
of ale.

A war that we understood not came over the world and
woke
Americans, Frenchmen, Irish; but we knew not the
things they spoke.
They talked about rights and nature and peace and the
people's reign:
And the squires, our masters, bade us fight; and never
scorned us again.
Weak if we be for ever, could none condemn us then;
Men called us serfs and drudges; men knew that we were
men.
In foam and flame at Trafalgar, on Albuera plains,
We did and died like lions, to keep ourselves in chains,
We lay in living ruins; firing and fearing not
The strange fierce face of the Frenchmen who knew for
what they fought,
And the man who seemed to be more than man we
strained against and broke;
And we broke our own rights with him. And still we
never spoke.

Our path of glory ended; we never heard guns again.
But the squire seemed struck in the saddle; he was foolish,
as if in pain

He leaned on a staggering lawyer, he clutched a cringing Jew,
He was stricken; it may be, after all, he was stricken at Waterloo.
Or perhaps the shades of the shaven men, whose spoil is in his house,
Come back in shining shapes at last to spoil his last carouse:
We only know the last sad squires ride slowly towards the sea,
And a new people takes the land: and still it is not we.

They have given us into the hands of the new unhappy lords,
Lords without anger and honour, who dare not carry their swords.
They fight by shuffling papers; they have bright dead alien eyes;
They look at our labour and laughter as a tired man looks at flies.
And the load of their loveless pity is worse than the ancient wrongs,
Their doors are shut in the evening; and they know no songs.

We hear men speaking for us of new laws strong and sweet,
Yet is there no man speaketh as we speak in the street.
It may be we shall rise the last as Frenchmen rose the first,
Our wrath come after Russia's wrath and our wrath be the worst.

It may be we are meant to mark with our riot and our rest
God's scorn for all men governing. It may be beer is best.
But we are the people of England; and we have not spoken yet.
Smile at us, pay us, pass us. But do not quite forget.

FROM THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE

FAR northward and far westward
The distant tribes drew nigh,
Plains beyond plains, fell beyond fell,
That a man at sunset sees so well,
And the tiny coloured towns that dwell
In the corners of the sky.

But dark and thick as thronged the host,
With drum and torch and blade,
The still-eyed King sat pondering,
As one that watches a live thing,
The scoured chalk; and he said,

"Though I give this land to Our Lady,
That helped me in Athelney,
Though lordlier trees and lustier sod
And happier hills hath no flesh trod
Than the garden of the Mother of God
Between Thames side and the sea,

" I know that weeds shall grow in it
Faster than men can burn ;
And though they scatter now and go,
In some far century, sad and slow,
I have a vision, and I know
The heathen shall return.

" They shall not come with warships,
They shall not waste with brands,
But books be all their eating,
And ink be on their hands.

" Not with the humour of hunters
Or savage skill in war,
But ordering all things with dead words,
Strings shall they make of beasts and birds
And wheels of wind and star.

" They shall come mild as monkish clerks,
With many a scroll and pen ;
And backward shall ye turn and gaze,
Desiring one of Alfred's days,
When pagans still were men.

" The dear sun dwarfed of dreadful suns,
Like fiercer flowers on stalk,
Earth lost and little like a pea
In high heaven's towering forestry,
—These be the small weeds ye shall see
Crawl, covering the chalk.

" But though they bridge St. Mary's sea,
Or steal St. Michael's wing—
Though they rear marvels over us,
Greater than great Vergilius
Wrought for the Roman king ;

" By this sign you shall know them,
The breaking of the sword,
And Man no more a free knight,
That loves or hates his lord.

" Yea, this shall be the sign of them,
The sign of the dying fire ;
And Man made like a half-wit,
That knows not of his sire.

" What though they come with scroll and pen,
And grave as a shaven clerk,
By this sign you shall know them,
That they ruin and make dark ;

" By all men bond to Nothing,
Being slaves without a lord,
By one blind idiot world obeyed,
Too blind to be abhorred ;

" By terror and the cruel tales
Of curse in bone and kin,
By weird and weakness winning,
Accursed from the beginning,
By detail of the sinning,
And denial of the sin ;

" By thought a crawling ruin,
By life a leaping mire,
By a broken heart in the breast of the world,
And the end of the world's desire ;

" By God and man dishonoured,
By death and life made vain,
Know ye the old barbarian,
The barbarian come again——

" When is great talk of trend and tide,
And wisdom and destiny,
Hail that undying heathen
That is sadder than the sea.

" In what wise men shall smite him,
Or the Cross stand up again,
Or charity, or chivalry,
My vision saith not ; and I see
No more ; but now ride doubtfully
To the battle of the plain."

And the grass-edge of the great down
Was clean cut as a lawn,
While the levies thronged from near and far,
From the warm woods of the western star,
And the King went out to his last war
On a tall grey horse at dawn.

And news of his far-off fighting
Came slowly and brokenly

From the land of the East Saxons,
From the sunrise and the sea,

From the plains of the white sunrise,
And sad St. Edmund's crown,
Where the pools of Essex pale and gleam
Out beyond London Town——

In mighty and doubtful fragments,
Like faint or fabled wars,
Climbed the old hills of his renown,
Where the bald brow of White Horse Down
Is close to the cold stars.

But away in the eastern places
The wind of death walked high,
And a raid was driven athwart the raid,
The sky reddened and the smoke swayed,
And the tall grey horse went by.

The gates of the great river
Were breached as with a barge,
The walls sank crowded, say the scribes,
And high towers populous with tribes
Seemed leaning from the charge.

Smoke like rebellious heavens rolled
Curled over coloured flames,
Billowed in monstrous purple dreams
In the mighty pools of Thames.

Loud was the war on London wall,
And loud in London gates,
And loud the sea-kings on the cloud
Broke through their dreaming gods, and loud
Cried on their dreadful fates.

And all the while on White Horse Hill
The horse lay long and wan,
The turf crawled and the fungus crept,
And the little sorrel, while all men slept,
Unwrought the work of man.

With velvet finger, velvet foot,
The fierce soft mosses then
Crept on the large white commonweal
All folk had striven to strip and peel,
And the grass, like a great green witch's wheel,
Unwound the toils of men.

And clover and silent thistle throve,
And buds burst silently,
With little care for the Thames Valley
Or what things there might be—

That away on the widening river,
In the eastern plains for crown
Stood up in the pale purple sky
One turret of smoke like ivory;
And the smoke changed and the wind went by,
And the King took London Town.

GWEN CLEAR

FIDDLE SONG

Sometimes beside a violin I stand,
And look from the fine fiddle to my hand
And back again where potent music lies
Pent up within its technicalities.
Music's quiescence mocks me where I stand,
Silent, beside its mute intricacies.

There are three friends, and two know not each other.
The Soul stands whispering sweetly—"Sister . . .
Brother . . .
The World's unuttered music hides within" . . .
And yet the hand knows not the violin.

GRIEF

Grief moves not,
She is stunned;
Nor murmurs,
She is dumb
And impotent to sound.
Great Michael, should he come
In flame, could not assail
The impenetrable veil
Of peace that wraps her round.
Grief hath no bitterness,
Nor vaunteth her distress;

Grief weeps not—
She is spent
With disillusionment;
Knowing not tide, nor time, nor high event.

Grief heareth not at all;
Is deaf to every call
From those forgotten lands
Whence Life came with full hands.

She hath no part or portion with rich earth,
Being foredoomed to suffer endless dearth
In the strange wastes where Beauty hath no birth.
Like windows barred at night,
Her eyes do hold no light,
And shed no rays without.
Perforce, who goeth by,
Knocking for lights, must cry—
"Their candles are all out."

PADRAIC COLUM

THE OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

O, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf again' the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains,
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled with white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Cleaning and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed, and loth to leave
The ticking clock and shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house or bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and rain's way.

THE DEER OF IRELAND

An old man said, " I saw
The chief of the things that are gone ;
A stag with head held high,
A doe, and a fawn ;

" And they were the deer of Ireland
That scorned to breed within bound :
The last ; they left no race
Tame on a pleasure ground.

" A stag, with his hide all rough
With the dew, and a doe and a fawn ;
Nearby, on their track on the mountain
I watched them, two and one,

" Down to the Shannon going—
Did its waters cease to flow,
When they passed, they that carried the swiftness,
And the pride of long ago ?

" The last of the troop that had heard
Finn's and Oscar's cry ;
A doe and a fawn, and before,
A stag with head held high ! "

FRANCES CORNFORD

AUTUMN EVENING

The shadows flickering, the daylight dying,
And I upon the old red sofa lying,
The great brown shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

I thought to send my soul to far-off lands,
Where fairies scamper on the windy sands,
Or where the autumn rain comes drumming down
On huddled roofs in an enchanted town.

But O my sleepy soul, it will not roam,
It is too happy and too warm at home :
With just the shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

SUSAN TO DIANA

A VILLANELLE

Your youth is like a water-wetted stone,
A pebble by the living sea made rare,
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

Behold it flushed like flowers newly blown,
Miraculously fresh beyond compare—
Your youth is like a water-wetted stone.

For when the triumphing tide recedes, alone
The stone will stay, and shine no longer there
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

But lie and dry as joyless as a bone,
Because the sorceress sea has gone elsewhere.
Your youth is like a water-wetted stone.

Then all your lovers will be children, shown
Their treasure only transitory-fair,
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

Remember this before your hour is flown,
O you, who are so glorious, beware!
Your youth is like a water-wetted stone,
Bright with a beauty that is not its own.

RHYME FOR A PHONETICIAN

Brave English language, you are strong as trees,
Yet intricate and stately—Thus one sees
Through branches clear-embroidered stars. You please
Our sense as damask roses on the breeze,
And barns that smell of hay, and bread and cheese.
Rustic yet Roman—yours are dignities
Sonorous as the sea's sound. On my knees
I would give thanks for all your words. Yet these—
Our legacy and our delight—he'd squeeze
And nip and dock and drill, to write with ease
Comershul memoz faw the Pawchoogeese.

THE HILLS

Out of the complicated house, come I
To walk beneath the sky.
Here mud and stones and turf, here everything
Is mutely comforting.
Now hung upon the twigs than thorns appear
A host of lovely rain-drops cold and clear.
And on the bank
Or deep in brambly hedges dank
The small birds nip about, and say :
" Brothers, the spring is not so far away ! "
The hills like mother-giantesses old
Lie in the cold,
And with a complete patience, let
The cows come cropping on their bosoms wet,
And even tolerate that such as I
Should wander by
With paltry leathern heel which cannot harm
Their bodies calm ;
And, with a heart they cannot know, to bless
The enormous power of their peacefulness.

OUT OF DOORS

Lie down, O woman, let the September sun
Pour with huge bounty on your bleachèd skin,
The little, last, remaining spiders run
From the dry leaves about your fingers thin.

Heed not, O Sun, her cares or her desires ;
Renew her body, let her spirit pass
Into the spirit of the autumn fires,
Far noises, mountains, and the stalks of grass.

W. H. DAVIES

DAYS TOO SHORT

When primroses are out in spring,
And small, blue violets come between;
When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,
As though escaped from Nature's hand
Ere perfect quite; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps;

When small clouds are so silvery white
Each seems a broken rimmèd moon—
When such things are, this world too soon,
For me, doth wear the veil of Night.

THE EXAMPLE

Here's an example from
A butterfly;
That on a rough hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

THE EAST IN GOLD

Somehow this world is wonderful at times,
As it has been from early morn in May;
Since I first heard the cock-a-doodle-do,
Timekeeper on green farms—at break of day.

Soon after that I heard ten thousand birds,
Which made me think an angel brought a bin
Of golden grain, and none was scattered yet—
To rouse those birds to make that merry din.

I could not sleep again, for such wild cries,
And went out early into their green world;
And then I saw what set their little tongues
To scream for joy—they saw the East in gold.

THE HAPPY CHILD

I saw this day sweet flowers grow thick—
But not one like the child did pick.

I heard the packhounds in green park—
But no dog like the child heard bark.

I heard this day bird after bird—
But not one like the child has heard.

A hundred butterflies saw I—
But not one like the child saw fly.

I saw the horses roll in grass—
But no horse like the child saw pass.

My world this day has lovely been—
But not like what the child has seen.

A GREAT TIME

Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad,
Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—
A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord,
How rich and great the times are now!
Know, all ye sheep
And cows, that keep
On staring that I stand so long
In grass that's wet from heavy rain—
A rainbow and a cuckoo's song
May never come together again;
May never come
This side the tomb.

THE WHITE CASCADE

What happy mortal sees that mountain now,
The white cascade that's shining on its brow ;

The white cascade that's both a bird and star,
That has a ten-mile voice and shines as far ?

Though I may never leave this land again,
Yet every spring my mind must cross the main

To hear and see that water-bird and star
That on the mountain sings, and shines so far.

IN MAY

Yes, I will spend the livelong day
With Nature in this month of May ;
And sit beneath the trees, and share
My bread with birds whose homes are there ;
While cows lie down to eat, and sheep
Stand to their necks in grass so deep ;
While birds do sing with all their might,
As though they felt the earth in flight.
This is the hour I dreamed of, when
I sat surrounded by poor men ;
And thought of how the Arab sat
Alone at evening, gazing at
The stars that bubbled in clear skies ;

And of young dreamers, when their eyes
Enjoyed methought a precious boon
In the adventures of the Moon
Whose light, behind the Clouds' dark bars,
Searched for her stolen flocks of stars.
When I, hemmed in by wrecks of men,
Thought of some lonely cottage then,
Full of sweet books ; and miles of sea,
With passing ships, in front of me ;
And having, on the other hand,
A flowery, green, bird-singing land.

THUNDERSTORMS

My mind has thunderstorms,
That brood for heavy hours ;
Until they rain me words,
My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
And brood your heavy hours ;
For when you rain me words
My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds.

SWEET STAY-AT-HOME

Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Well-content,
Thou knowest of no strange continent :

Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep
A gentle motion with the deep ;
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow
For miles, as far as eyes can go ;
Thou hast not seen a summer's night
When maids could sew by a worm's light ;
Nor the North Sea in spring send out
Bright trees that like birds flit about
In solid cages of white ice—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Love-one-place.
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick
White cotton when the bloom is thick,
Nor heard black throats in harmony ;
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie
Flat on the earth, that once did rise
To hide proud kings from common eyes.
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom
Where green things had such little room
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face ;
For thou hast made more homely stuff
Nurture thy gentle self enough ;
I love thee for a heart that's kind—
Not for the knowledge in thy mind.

EDWARD L. DAVISON

THE TREES

I DID not know your names and yet I saw
The handiwork of Beauty in your boughs,
I worshipped as the Druids did, in awe,
Feeling at spring my pagan soul arouse
To see your leaf-buds open to the day,
And dull green moss upon your ragged girth,
The hoary sanctity of your decay,
Life and Death glimmering upon the Earth.

IN THIS DARK HOUSE

I SHALL come back to die
From a far place at last
After my life's carouse
In the old bed to lie,
Remembering the past
In this dark house.

Because of a clock's chime
In the long waste of night
I shall awake and wait
At that calm lonely time
Each smell and sound and sight
Mysterious and innate :
Some shadow on the wall

When curtains by the door
Move in a draught of wind ;
Or else a light footfall
In a near corridor ;
Even to feel the kind
Caress of a cool hand
Smoothing the draggled hair
Back from my shrunken brow,
And strive to understand
The woman's presence there,
And whence she came, and how.

What gust of wind that night
Shall mutter her lost name
Through windows open wide,
And twist the flickering light
Of a sole candle's flame
Smoking from side to side,
Till the last spark it blows
Sets a moth's wings aflare
As the faint flame goes out ?

Some distant door may close ;
Perhaps a heavy chair
On bare floors dragged about
O'er the low ceiling sound,
And the thin twig of a tree
Knock on my window-pane
Till all the night around
Is listening with me,

While like a noise of rain
Leaves rustle in the wind.

Then from the inner gloom
The scratching of a mouse
May echo down my mind
And sound around the room
In this dark house.

The vague scent of a flower,
Smelt then in that warm air
From gardens drifting in,
May slowly overpower
The vapid lavender,
Till feebly I begin
To count the scents I knew
And name them one by one,
And search the names for this.

Dreams will be swift and few
Ere that last night be done,
And gradual silences
In each long interim
Of halting time awake
Confuse all conscious sense.
Shadows will grow more dim,
And sound and scent forsake
The dark ere dawn commence.

In the new morning then,
So fixed the stare and fast,

The calm unseeing eye
Will never close again.

. . . .

I shall come back at last
To this dark house to die.

I HEARD THE OLD MEN

(*Lines on being told that I had all the illusions of youth*)

I HEARD the old men talk together,
Nodding grey heads one to another,
And dimly seen from my window-sill
(So cool was dusk and the air so still)
The blue tobacco-cloud under me
Blossomed up from the vanishing tree
Till darkness gathered the phantom flower.
But under the leafage hour by hour
One to another I heard them say
Yesterday—Yesterday—Yesterday !

. . . . .

It is all true that men born long ago
Pondered and spoke even as I do now,
Planning to mend earth's sorrows : even so
Do I. With earnest voice and serious brow
Each learned life's lurking secrets from the wise,
Like me they loved, growing old in discontent,
Till all illusion faded from their eyes ;
Beauty's mirage, brief and impermanent,

And first love's all-too-soon frustrated dream,
And impulse mocked and hope and faith belied,
All that was highest in the heart's esteem
Betrayed, exhausted, hurt, unsatisfied.

It is not all a dream, though when I speak
The old men smile and cowardice defers ;
Ambition, Hope and Love seem strangely weak
And perishable things,—poor travellers
Treading an alien land where the sea-mark
Looms in the mist obscure, and yet they know
It is not all illusion, for the dark
Sonorous sea sucks at the rocks below
And men grow deaf in age.

I'll not believe
That time can quench the ardour of the heart
Or bate one impulse out of youth, or grieve
Its mocked ideal dream. I will not part
With any sympathy for common things
That yesterday thought beautiful or good,
Not one enthusiasm that beauty brings
Will I let sleep, but die within this mood
Rather than lose another love I had,
Having so few surviving yesterday.

It is not all a dream. I will be glad
That there's some spirit treading upon earth
(Though scarcely heard, yet felt in every breath
Of the free air), a spirit of rebirth
In their own sons, for those who suffered death :

For there are poets wakening into song
And soldiers seeking peace on earth again,
I will believe in life while I am young,
For once grown old there's no believing then.

THE FRIEND

Because my deeper heart commands,
To-night I leave this house of men
To find a brook to cleanse my hands
And not to tread these streets again.

My old unhappy hope no more
Shall search a passing stranger's eyes
To find the light it fainted for,
But never see that light arise.

And now at last my lips shall end
The long pretence of smile and speech,
For I will take that man for friend
Whose love I need not to beseech.

We two will labour all day long,
And sleep by night and rest at noon,
He will not mind my broken song
When we tread homeward in the moon.

He will be pure in heart, and I
Be strong in him, and in his trust
I shall not be a living lie:
He will be just and I be just.

And though thereafter if the dream
Hushed either heart within the breast,
Nor he nor I that hour would seem
To grudge the other's greater rest.

A PROSPECT OF RETROSPECT

When I think how time will pass
Until this Now is turned to Then,
Like smoke that fades within a glass
Seem the curled fancies of my pen.

For this year's sturdy discontent
Will read in words a boy mis-spelled,
When I have weighed the Much life meant
Against the Little that it held.

SONNET

O Thou in the darkness far beyond the spheres
That seest me, puny, under the night below
Treading through Destiny to Death, forego
Thy triumph and glory for a score of years :
Leave me alive amid my hopes and fears,
The tempest of the mind, the joy, the woe,
That I may battle with myself and know
The worth of life, though be it by bitter tears.

Set not Thy stars against me whether I prove
Evil or good, ere from my inward spirit
Beauty and Truth depart, nor judge me less
In the full storm than in the calm thereof;
Yet from the circle of earth that I inherit
O lift the shadow of this long loneliness!

SONNET

Now that the moonlight withers from the sky
Like hope within my heart, what's left to do
But dream alone until the day I die
On some imagined memory of you?
Believe there was a day when for a space
I looked into your unaverted eyes
To feel my spirit awake at their embrace
Articulate and beautiful and wise;
Or dream I hear your voice in the dim pause
Of dawn, ere birds awake, and feel your hand
Seek mine, when some night-fancy overawes
Your drowsy thoughts, knowing I understand:
Better to falsify you thus and rest
Than know myself for ever dispossessed.

THE UNBORN SON

There is a tremor on the hills,
  The saplings stir within the wood,
The sunlight seeks the daffodils
  And I forget the things I rued.

Cheered by the promise of the spring
I have foreseen my life's content,
Dreamed of a lovelier blossoming
Than ever April gave to Lent.

In some far fairer spring than this
Love will come home to me indeed;
My lips may waken in her kiss
A flower from the sleeping seed.

And may be in some wintry night
I shall wait helpless, no one by,
Nerved by anxiety's delight
To hear amid the wind a cry. . . .

A cry that snaps the thought of death
And bursts the triple dark for me,
That with a glory in its breath
Proclaims my immortality.

THE VIGIL

Beat on, dull bell! Mark me this feeble hour
That cannot come again. Two . . . three . . . so soon!
And not an echo left to overpower
The silence of a night without a moon.

By what last vanity of hope deceived
Sought I to see her? Now that earth's a dream
To mock the minds of men, who sleep aggrieved
By their own crippled hearts, at what extreme

Of mad imagining love am I who sought
Her house in this dark night? There's not a sound
That whispers louder than my silent thought
In all the world, even to the farthest bound.

How like a stone I stand, fixed, rigid, chill
And yet not senseless, for I heard the chime—
When matters nothing, though I listen still:
Maybe an hour's gone by . . . I'll count the time.

One minute . . . two . . . how dark the windows . . . *three* . . .
Her house how dark . . . *four* now . . . perhaps she'll wake
And look across. But she'll not wake for thee,
Poor fool . . . *five*—let it go! . . . Not for thy sake. . . .

Never, though Time on the meridian stops
And thy long ranting's done; not waken then
Though such another darkness downward drops
As this that hides her, never to rise again!

THE LETTERS

I HAVE tied in the box with a rough twine of string
Her many letters to me, the hasty and gay
Scrawled in holiday mood, and the pensive lines
Drooping like threads for absence to hang upon,
Days and nights of slow irresolute hope,
So many beads flashing iridian light
On the neck of Time—these, and the scattering sparks

Dashed from the fire ere ever the wind had fallen
Or the river sobbed to sleep—I have shut them all in the box.
Her fancies shall people a world within it, and I
Some day, lifting the lid, shall suddenly see
The vague, familiar shadows stir in the light—
Cities and hills and fields with rivers between,
And flowers in the fields, and children playing around
With her sweet self in the midst. And whether I'll know
The name of anything then or recognise
The tallest figure of all to be myself,
Me, as her eyes once saw me, I dare not say.
Perhaps when I open the box they will fade away.

THE ENCHANTED HEART

HERE blew winter once with the snowstorms spurning
Hill and furrow and field till all were whitened;
Here it was the robin flew away frightened
When I went by dreaming of spring returning.

Now that I walk on selfsame meadow and hill
Why seems winter the fairer, happier season,
And spring the very root of the mind's unreason?
Why do I ponder and roam unhappily still?

What do you lack to-day that you lacked not then,
O brooding heart, that you cannot be contented?
Far away, says the heart that was enchanted,
Long ago . . . in a dream . . . O never again!

JEFFERY DAY

Born 1896

Killed in Action 1918

"ON THE WINGS OF THE MORNING"

A SUDDEN roar, a mighty rushing sound,
a jolt or two, a smoothly sliding rise,
a tumbled blur of disappearing ground,
and then all sense of motion slowly dies.
Quiet and calm, the earth slips past below,
as underneath a bridge still waters flow.

My turning wing inclines towards the ground;
the ground itself glides up with graceful swing
and at the plane's far tip twirls slowly round,
then drops from sight again beneath the wing
to slip away serenely as before,
a cubist-patterned carpet on the floor.

Hills gently sink and valleys gently fill.
The flattened fields grow ludicrously small;
slowly they pass beneath and slower still
until they hardly seem to move at all.
Then suddenly they disappear from sight,
hidden by fleeting wisps of faded white.

The wing-tips, faint and dripping, dimly show,
blurred by the wreaths of mist that intervene.
Weird, half-seen shadows flicker to and fro
across the pallid fog-bank's blinding screen.
At last the choking mists release their hold,
and all the world is silver, blue, and gold.

The air is clear, more clear than sparkling wine;
compared with this wine is a turgid brew.
The far horizon makes a clean-cut line
between the silver and the depthless blue.
Out of the snow-white level reared on high
glittering hills surge up to meet the sky.

Outside the wind-screen's shelter gales may race:
but in the seat a cool and gentle breeze
blows steadily upon my grateful face,
as I sit motionless and at my ease,
contented just to loiter in the sun
and gaze around me till the day is done.

And so I sit, half sleeping, half awake,
dreaming a happy dream of golden days,
until at last, with a reluctant shake
I rouse myself, and with a lingering gaze
at all the splendour of the shining plain
make ready to come down to earth again.

The engine stops: a pleasant silence reigns—
silence, not broken, but intensified
by the soft, sleepy wires' insistent strains,
that rise and fall, as with a sweeping glide
I slither down the well-oiled sides of space,
towards a lower, less enchanted place.

The clouds draw nearer, changing as they come.
Now, like a flash, fog grips me by the throat.

Down goes the nose : at once the wires' low hum
begins to rise in volume and in note,
till, as I hurtle from the choking cloud
it swells into a scream, high-pitched, and loud.

The scattered hues and shades of green and brown
fashion themselves into the land I know,
turning and twisting, as I spiral down
towards the landing ground ; till, skimming low,
I glide with slackening speed across the ground,
and come to rest with lightly grating sound.

GEOFFREY DEARMER

BIRDS

Eagles, you browless birds, who skim
The sky on poised and feathered limb,
You whom no sky's top terrifies,
Taught me the terror of the skies.

Cold cormorants, your spray-wet sheen,
Your cold bead eyes of glassy green,
And bubbling death-dive, swift and steep,
Taught me the terror of the deep.

Red-eyed, red-clawed, you vultures keen
Who find no carrion flesh unclean,
Who gather and cry at life's last breath,
Taught me the sanctity of death.

You whistling swans, your flapping flight,
A huge-formed arrow head of white
Over and down the horizon's dip,
Taught me the law of leadership.

You downy-eiders, from your breasts
Plucking the down to build your nests,
Taught me, as no commandment could,
The sacrifice of motherhood.

And you, live-crested cockatoos,
Grave toucans, hornbills and hoopoes ;
Huge-billed, fixed-faced, preposterous birds,
Taught me God's wit, surpassing words.

UNSEEN

THERE was no sign, the landscape solid stood
And brown clouds frothed the sun's fall through a bath
Of claret merged with orange, yet the wood,
The stream, and every hillock, hedge, and path

I knew was full of life . . . an adder crept
And flickered like his own worm-flickering tongue ;
The dewfall owl in darkening shadow slept ;
Over the hill the swallow southward swung.

The boy-faced baby otters were at play ;
The kingfisher had hidden his blaze of blue ;
Hunching his back a weasel went his way ;
I knew the wren was sleeping, and I knew

A bat unfurled his weft-winged sails and sped ;
A harvest mouse swarmed up an ear of corn ;
A snouted shrew-mouse in an owl's beak bled ;
A bird was killed, another bird was born.

Without a sign or sound these things were done,
Beneath the sunset while I waited there ;
But had I seen them starkly in the sun,
The sight could not have made me more aware.

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.

Never the leaſt ſtir made the liſteners,
Though every word he ſpake
Fell echoing through the ſhadowiness of the ſtill houſe
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the ſtirrup,
And the ſound of iron on ſtone
And how the ſilence ſurged ſoftly backward
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

ARABIA

Far are the ſhades of Arabia,
Where the Princes ride at noon,
'Mid the verdurous vales and thickets,
Under the ghoſt of the moon;
And ſo dark is that vaulted purple
Flowers in the foreſt riſe
And toſs into bloſſom 'gainſt the phantom ſtars
Pale in the noonday ſkies.

Sweet is the muſic of Arabia
In my heart, when out of dreams
I ſtill in the thin clear mirk of dawn
Deſcry her gliding ſtreams;
Hear her ſtrange lutes on the green banks
Ring loud with the grief and delight
Of the dim-ſilked, dark-haired Muſicians
In the brooding ſilence of night.

They haunt me—her lutes and her forests ;
No beauty on earth I see
But shadowed with that dream recalls
Her loveliness to me :
Still eyes look coldly upon me,
Cold voices whisper and say—
" He is crazed with the spell of far Arabia,
They have stolen his wits away."

MUSIC

When music sounds, gone is the earth I know,
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow ;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

When music sounds, out of the water rise
Naiads whose beauty dims my waking eyes,
Rapt in strange dream burns each enchanted face,
With solemn echoing stirs their dwelling-place.

When music sounds, all that I was I am,
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came ;
And from Time's woods break into distant song
The swift-winged hours as I hasten along.

THE SCRIBE

What lovely things
Thy hand hath made,
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,

The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Stirs, and hastes on.

Though I should sit
By some tarn in Thy hills,
Using its ink
As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonders,
Its live willed things,
Flit would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly;
And still would remain
My wit to try—
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten—
Thou, Lord, and I.

THE GHOST

"WHO knocks?" "I, who was beautiful
Beyond all dreams to restore,
I from the roots of the dark thorn am hither,
And knock on the door."

"Who speaks?" "I—once was my speech
Sweet as the bird's on the air,
When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
'Tis I speak thee fair."

"Dark is the hour!" "Aye, and cold."
"Lone is my house." "Ah, but mine?"
"Sight, touch, lips, eyes gleamed in vain."
"Long dead these to thine."

Silence. Still faint on the porch
Broke the flames of the stars.
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand
Over keys, bolts, and bars.

A face peered. All the grey night
In chaos of vacancy shone;
Nought but vast sorrow was there—
The sweet cheat gone.

CLEAR EYES

Clear eyes do dim at last,
And cheeks outlive their rose.
Time, heedless of the past,
No loving-kindness knows;
Chill unto mortal lip
Still Lethe flows.

Griefs, too, but brief while stay,
And sorrow, being o'er,
Its salt tears shed away,
Woundeth the heart no more.
Stealthily lave these waters
That solemn shore.

Ah, then, sweet face burn on,
While yet quick memory lives!
And Sorrow, ere thou art gone,
Know that my heart forgives—
Ere yet, grown cold in peace,
It loves not, nor grieves.

FAREWELL

When I lie where shades of darkness
Shall no more assail mine eyes,
Nor the rain make lamentation
When the wind sighs;
How will fare the world whose wonder
Was the very proof of me?
Memory fades, must the remembered
Perishing be?

Oh, when this my dust surrenders
Hand, foot, lip to dust again,
May those loved and loving faces
Please other men!

May the rusting harvest hedgerow
Still the Traveller's Joy entwine,
And as happy children gather
Posies once mine.

Look thy last on all things lovely,
Every hour. Let no night
Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
Till to delight
Thou have paid thy utmost blessing;
Since that all things thou wouldst praise
Beauty took from those who loved them
In other days.

ALL THAT'S PAST

Very old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the briar's boughs,
When March winds wake,
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;
And the rills that rise
When snow sleeps cold beneath
The azure skies

Sing such a history
  Of come and gone,
Their every drop is as wise
  As Solomon.

Very old are we men;
  Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
  By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
  But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
  Of Amaranth lie.

THE SONG OF THE MAD PRINCE

Who said, "Peacock Pie"?
  The old King to the sparrow:
Who said, "Crops are ripe"?
  Rust to the harrow:
Who said, "Where sleeps she now?
  Where rests she now her head,
Bathed in Eve's loveliness"?—
  That's what I said.

Who said, "Ay, mum's the word"?
  Sexton to willow:
Who said, "Green dust for dreams,
  Moss for a pillow"?

Who said, " All Time's delight
Hath she for narrow bed ;
Life's troubled bubble broken " ?—
That's what I said.

JOHN DRINKWATER

BIRTHRIGHT

Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed
Because a summer evening passed;
And little Ariadne cried
That summer fancy fell at last
To dust; and young Verona died
When beauty's hour was overcast.

Theirs was the bitterness we know
Because the clouds of hawthorn keep
So short a state, and kisses go
To tombs unfathomably deep,
While Rameses and Romeo
And little Ariadne sleep.

MOONLIT APPLES

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams,
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep,
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep
On moon-washed apples of wonder.

SONNET

When all the hungry pain of love I bear,
And in poor lightless thought but burn and burn,
And wit goes hunting wisdom everywhere,
Yet can no word of revelation learn,
When endlessly the scales of yea and nay
In dreadful motion fall and rise and fall,
When all my heart in sorrow I could pay
Until at last were left no tear at all,
Then if with tame or subtle argument
Companions come and draw me to a place
Where words are but the tappings of content,
And life spreads all her garments with a grace,
I curse that ease, and hunger in my heart
Back to my pain and lonely to depart.

IN THE VALLEY

Let none devout forgive my sin
  Who have not sinned as I;
The soul immaculate within
  Has not to measure by
  My sorrowing husbandry.

The dark, the error, of my days
  Shall be consoled by none
That have not in forbidden ways
  Wandered as I have done
  With faces from the sun.

Princes of virtue, keep your skill
  Of pardon for your peers;
Frail with the frail I travel still
  Along uncertain years—
  Forbear your holy tears.

One hour in black Gethsemane
  I walked with Him alone.
He sees, He knows, He touches me—
How shall it then be known
  To you, O hearts of stone?

WHO WERE BEFORE ME

Long time in some forgotten churchyard earth of Warwickshire,
My fathers in their generations lie beyond desire,
And nothing breaks the rest, I know, of John Drinkwater now,
Who left in sixteen-seventy his roan team at plough.

And James, son of John, is there, a mighty ploughman too,
Skilled he was at thatching and the barleycorn brew,
And he had a heart-load of sorrow in his day,
But ten score of years ago he put it away.

Then Thomas came, and played a fiddle cut of mellow wood,
And broke his heart, they say, for love that never came to good.
A hundred winter peals and more have rung above his bed—
O, poor eternal grief, so long, so lightly, comforted.

And in the gentle yesterday these were but glimmering tombs,
Or tales to tell on fireside eves of legendary dooms;
I being life while they were none, what had their dust to bring
But cold intelligence of death upon my tides of spring?

Now grief is in my shadow, and it seems well enough
To be there with my fathers, where neither fear nor love
Can touch me more, nor spite of men, nor my own
teasing blame,
While the slow mosses weave an end of my forgotten
name.

R. C. K. ENSOR

ODE TO REALITY

O REAL, O That Which Is,
Beyond all earthly bliss
My spirit prays to be at one with Thee;
Away from that which seems,
From unenduring dreams,
From vain pursuits and vainer meeds set free.

How rosy to our eyes
The mists of error rise,
The proud pavilions that we weave at will!
How glittering the ray
Of that illusive day,
The hills how grand, the vales how green and still!

And how inviting yet
The service of deceit,
Paid by the crowd that does not understand,
Parents and friends and foes
All bowing down to those
Who against Thee have lifted up their hand!

Ah, but on whomsoever
Amid such glib endeavour
Thy light has shined in sudden sovereignty,
He who has fallen and heard
Thy spirit-searching word:
Why kick against the pricks? Why outrage Me?

He can no longer ſtay
There in the easy way,
No longer please himself with make-believe,
No longer shape at will
The forms of good and ill
And what he ſhall reject and what receive.

Nor may he dwell content
In self-aggrandisement,
To the deep wrong of modern Mammon blind ;
Nor can he drown his cares
Among the doctrinaires,
Who think by sowing hate to save mankind.

For every scheme of vision
He sees as the condition
Not of the trueſt only but the beſt—
The riches of all wealth,
The beauty of Beauty's self—
That on Thee and within Thee it should reſt.

By Thee our bounds are set ;
Thou madeſt us ; and yet,
O Mother, when we ſtrain to see Thy face,
Still doſt Thou tease our prying
With masks and myſtifying,
Still hold us at arm's length from Thy embrace !

Yet I would rather in act
Plough with the iron Fact

And earn at least some harvest that is bread,
    Than rich and popular
    In gay Imposture's car
Dazzle mankind and leave them still unfed.

    Rather would I in thought
    Miss all that I had sought,
Still pining on Negation's desert isle,
    Than with the current float
    In Pragmatism's boat
Down to the fatal shore where sirens smile.

    Rather would I be thrown
    Against Thine altar-stone,
Unsanctified, unpitied, unreprieved,
    Than in some other shrine
    Sup the priests' meat and wine,
Taking the wages of a world deceived.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER

Born 1884

Died 1915

TENEBRIS INTERLUCENTEM

A LINNET who had lost her way
Sang on a blackened bough in Hell,
Till all the ghosts remembered well
The trees, the wind, the golden day.

At last they knew that they had died
When they heard music in that land,
And some one there stole forth a hand
To draw a brother to his side.

WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

WE are they who come faster than fate : we are they who ride early or late :
We storm at your ivory gate : Pale Kings of the Sunset, beware !
Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children who mumble a prayer.
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise with a shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray of the wind in our hair.

From the lands, where the elephants are, to the forts of Merou and Balghar,

Our ſteel we have brought and our ſtar to shine on the ruins of Rum.
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and by God we will go there again;
We have ſtood on the shore of the plain where the Waters of Deſtiny boom.
A mart of deſtruction we made at Jalula where men were afraid,
For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not a few of ambition,
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine bitter and ſtrong:
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright as a desolate pool,
And as ſtraight as the rock of Stamboul when their cavalry thundered along:
For the coward was drowned with the brave when our battle sheered up like a wave,
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to God in our song.

THE OLD SHIPS

I HAVE seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men ſtill call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famaguſta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;

And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn,
An image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same
(Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

STILLNESS

When the words rustle no more,
And the last work's done,
When the bolt lies deep in the door,
And Fire, our Sun,
Falls on the dark-laned meadows of the floor;

When from the clock's last chime to the next chime
Silence beats his drum,
And Space with gaunt grey eyes and her brother Time
Wheeling and whispering come,
She with the mould of form and he with the loom of rhyme:

Then twittering out in the night my thought-birds flee,
I am emptied of all my dreams:
I only hear Earth turning, only see
Ether's long bankless streams,
And only know I should drown if you laid not your hand on me.

AREIYA

This place was formed divine for love and us to dwell;
This house of brown stone built for us to sleep therein;
Those blossoms haunt the rocks that we should see and smell;
Those old rocks break the hill that we the heights should win.

Those heights survey the sea that there our thoughts
should sail
Up the steep wall of wave to touch the Syrian sky:
For us that sky at eve fades out of purple pale,
Pale as the mountain mists beneath our house that lie.

In front of our small house are brown stone arches three;
Behind it, the low porch where all the jasmine grows;
Beyond it, red and green, the gay pomegranate tree;
Around it, like love's arms, the summer and the rose.

Within it sat and wrote in minutes soft and few
This worst and best of songs, one who loves it, and you.

THE QUEEN'S SONG

Had I the power
To Midas given of old
To touch a flower
And leave the petals gold
I then might touch thy face,
Delightful boy,
And leave a metal grace,
A graven joy.

Thus would I slay,—
Ah, desperate device!
The vital day
That trembles in thine eyes,

And let the red lips close
Which sang so well,
And drive away the rose
To leave a shell.

Then I myself,
Rising austere and dumb
On the high shelf
Of my half-lighted room,
Would place the shining bust
And wait alone,
Until I was but dust,
Buried unknown.

Thus in my love
For nations yet unborn,
I would remove
From our two lives the morn,
And muse on loveliness
In mine arm-chair,
Content should Time confess
How sweet you were.

BRUMANA

Oh shall I never never be home again ?
Meadows of England shining in the rain,
Spread wide your daisied lawns : your ramparts green
With briar fortify, with blossom screen

Till my far morning—and O streams that slow
And pure and deep through plains and playlands go,
For me your love and all your kingcups store,
And—dark militia of the southern shore,
Old fragrant friends—preserve me the last lines
Of that long saga which you sung me, pines,
When, lonely boy, beneath the chosen tree
I listened, with my eyes upon the sea.

O traitor pines, you sang what life has found
The falsest of fair tales.
Earth blew a far-horn prelude all around,
That native music of her forest home,
While from the sea's blue fields and syren dales
Shadows and light noon-spectres of the foam
Riding the summer gales
On aery viols plucked an idle sound.

Hearing you sing, O trees,
Hearing you murmur, " There are older seas,
That beat on vaster sands,
Where the wise snailfish move their pearly towers
To carven rocks and sculptured promont'ries,"
Hearing you whisper, " Lands
Where blaze the unimaginable flowers."

Beneath me in the valley waves the palm,
Beneath, beyond the valley, breaks the sea ;
Beneath me sleep in mist and light and calm
Cities of Lebanon, dream-shadow-dim,

Where Kings of Tyre and Kings of Tyre did rule
In ancient days in endless dynasty,
And all around the snowy mountains swim
Like mighty swans afloat in heaven's pool.

But I will walk upon the wooded hill
Where stands a grove, O pines, of sister pines,
And when the downy twilight droops her wing
And no sea glimmers and no mountain shines
My heart shall listen still.
For pines are gossip pines the wide world through
And full of runic tales to sigh or sing.

'Tis ever sweet through pine to see the sky
Mantling a deeper gold or darker blue.
'Tis ever sweet to lie
On the dry carpet of the needles brown,
And though the fanciful green lizard stir
And windy odours light as thistledown
Breathe from the lavdanon and lavender,
Half to forget the wandering and pain,
Half to remember days that have gone by,
And dream and dream that I am home again!

HYALI

Στὸ Γυαλὶ, στὸ γαλάζιο βράχο

Island in blue of summer floating on,
Little brave sister of the Sporades,
Hail and farewell! I pass, and thou art gone,
So fast in fire the great boat beats the seas.

But slowly fade, soft Island! Ah to know
Thy town and who the gossips of thy town,
What flowers flash in thy meadows, what winds blow
Across thy mountain when the sun goes down.

There is thy market, where the fisher throws
His gleaming fish that gasp in the death-bright dawn:
And there thy Prince's house, painted old rose,
Beyond the olives, crowns its slope of lawn.

And is thy Prince so rich that he displays
At festal board the flesh of sheep and kine?
Or dare he—summer days are long hot days—
Load up with Asian snow his Coan wine?

Behind a rock, thy harbour, whence a noise
Of tarry sponge-boats hammered lustily:
And from that little rock thy naked boys
Like burning arrows shower upon the sea.

And there by the old Greek chapel—there beneath
A thousand poppies that each sea-wind stirs
And cyclamen, as honied and white as death,
Dwell deep in earth the elder islanders.

. . . . . .

Thy name I know not, Island, but *his* name
I know, and why so proud thy mountain stands,
And what thy happy secret, and Who came
Drawing his painted galley up thy sands.

For my Gods—Trident Gods who deep and pale
Swim in the Latmian Sound, have murmured thus :
" To such an island came with a pompous sail
On his first voyage young Herodotus."

Since then—tell me no tale how Romans built,
Saracens plundered—or that bearded lords
Rowed by to fight for Venice, and here spilt
Their blood across the bay that keeps their swords.

That old Greek day was all thy history :
For that did Ocean poise thee as a flower.
Farewell : this boat attends not such as thee :
Farewell : I was thy lover for an hour !

Farewell ! But I who call upon thy caves
Am far like thee,—like thee, unknown and poor.
And yet my words are music as thy waves,
And like thy rocks shall down through time endure.

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

PROLOGUE

We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,
We Poets of the proud old lineage
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not why,—

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
And winds and shadows fall toward the West:

And there the world's first huge white-bearded kings
In dim glades, sleeping murmur in their sleep,
And closer round their breasts the ivy clings,
Cutting its pathway slow and red and deep.

II

And how beguile you? Death has no repose
Warmer and deeper than that Orient sand
Which hides the beauty and bright faith of those
Who made the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

And now they wait and whiten peaceably,
Those conquerors, those poets, those so fair:
They know time comes, not only you and I,
But the whole world shall whiten, here or there;

When those long caravans that cross the plain
With dauntless feet and sound of silver bells
Put forth no more for glory or for gain,
Take no more solace from the palm-girt wells,

When the great markets by the sea shut fast
All that calm Sunday that goes on and on:
When even lovers find their peace at last,
And Earth is but a star, that once had shone.

EPILOGUE

At the Gate of the Sun, Bagdad, in olden time

THE MERCHANTS (*together*)

Away, for we are ready to a man!
Our camels sniff the evening and are glad.
Lead on, O Master of the Caravan:
Lead on the Merchant-Princes of Bagdad.

THE CHIEF DRAPER

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bows and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

THE CHIEF GROCER

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,
Mastic and terebinth and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's own Prophet eats in Paradise.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

And we have manuscripts in peacock styles
By Ali of Damascus; we have swords
Engraved with storks and apes and crocodiles,
And heavy beaten necklaces, for Lords.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

But you are nothing but a lot of Jews.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

Sir, even dogs have daylight, and we pay.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes,
You dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?

THE PILGRIMS

We are the pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow,
Across that angry or that glimmering sea,
White on a throne or guarded in a cave
There lives a prophet who can understand
Why men were born: but surely we are brave,
Who make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

THE CHIEF MERCHANT

We gnaw the nail of hurry. Master, away!

ONE OF THE WOMEN

O turn your eyes to where your children stand.
Is not Bagdad the beautiful? O stay!

THE MERCHANTS (*in chorus*)

We take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

AN OLD MAN

Have you not girls and garlands in your homes,
Eunuchs and Syrian boys at your command?
Seek not excess: God hateth him who roams!

THE MERCHANTS (*in chorus*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

A PILGRIM WITH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE

Sweet to ride forth at evening from the wells
When shadows pass gigantic on the sand,
And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

A MERCHANT

We travel not for trafficking alone:
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:
For lust of knowing what should not be known
We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN

Open the gate, O watchman of the night!

THE WATCHMAN

Ho, travellers, I open. For what land
Leave you the dim-moon city of delight?

THE MERCHANTS (*with a shout*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

[*The Caravan passes through the gate*]

THE WATCHMAN (*consoling the women*)

What would ye, ladies? It was ever thus.
Men are unwise and curiously planned.

A WOMAN

They have their dreams, and do not think of us.

VOICES OF THE CARAVAN (*in the distance, singing*)

We make the Golden Journey to Samarkand.

YASMIN

A GHAZEL

How splendid in the morning glows the lily: with what grace he throws
His supplication to the rose: do roses nod the head, Yasmin?

But when the silver dove descends I find the little flower of friends
Whose very name that sweetly ends I say when I have said Yasmin.

The morning light is clear and cold: I dare not in that light behold
A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin.

But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway,
And some to Meccah turn to pray, and I towards thy bed, Yasmin;

Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul aswoon,
And harping planets talk love's tune with milky wings outspread, Yasmin,

Shower down thy love, O burning bright! For one night or the other night
Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered flowers are dead, Yasmin.

NOVEMBER EVES

November Evenings! Damp and still
They used to cloak Leckhampton Hill,
And lie down close on the grey plain,
And dim the dripping window-pane,
And send queer winds like Harlequins
That seized our elms for violins
And struck a note so sharp and low
Even a child could feel the woe.

Now fire chased shadow round the room;
Tables and chairs grew vast in gloom:
We crept about like mice, while Nurse
Sat mending, solemn as a hearse,
And even our unlearned eyes
Half closed with choking memories.

Is it the mist or the dead leaves,
Or the dead men—November eves?

ROBIN FLOWER

LA VIE CÉRÉBRALE

I AM alone—alone ;
There is nothing—only I,
And, when I will to die,
All must be gone.

Eternal thought in me
Puts on the dress of time
And builds a stage to mime
Its listless tragedy.

And in that dress of time
And on that stage of space
I place, chance, and replace
Life to a wilful rime.

I summon at my whim
All things that are, that were :
The high incredible air,
Where stars—my creatures—swim.

I dream, and from my mind
The dead, the living come ;
I build a marble Rome,
I give it to the wind.

Athens and Babylon
I breathe upon the night,
Troy towers for my delight
And crumbles stone by stone.

I change with white and green
The seasons hour by hour;
I think—it is a flower,
Think—and the flower has been.

Men, women, things, a stream
That wavers and flows by,
A lonely dreamer, I
Build and cast down the dream.

And one day weary grown
Of all my brain has wrought,
I shall destroy my thought
And I and all be gone.

THE PIPES

With the spring awaken other springs,
Those swallows' wings are shadowed by other wings
And another thrush behind that glad bird sings.

A multitude are the flowers, but multitudes
Blossom and waver and breathe from forgotten woods,
And in silent places an older silence broods.

With the spring long-buried springs in my heart awaken,
Time takes the years, but the springs he has not taken,
My thoughts with a boy's wild thoughts are mixed and
shaken.

And here amid inland fields by the down's green shoulder
I remember an ancient sea and mountains older,
Older than all but time, skies sterner and colder.
When the swift spring night on the sea and the mountains
fell
In the hush of the solemn hills I remember well
The far pipes calling and the tale they had to tell.

Sad was the tale, ah! sad beyond all saying
The lament of the lonely pipes in the evening playing
Lost in the glens, in the still, dark pines delaying.

And now with returning spring I remember all,
On southern fields those mountain shadows fall,
Those wandering pipes in the downland evening call.

SAY NOT THAT BEAUTY

Say not that beauty is an idle thing
And gathered lightly as a wayside flower
That on the trembling verges of the spring
Knows but the sweet survival of an hour.

For 'tis not so. Through dedicated days
  And foiled adventure of deliberate nights
We lose and find and stumble on the ways
  That lead to the far confluence of delights.
Not with the earthly eye and fleshly ear,
  But lifted far above mortality,
We see at last the eternal hills, and hear
  The sighing of the universal sea ;
And kneeling breathless in the holy place
We know immortal Beauty face to face.

JOHN FREEMAN

THE WAKERS

The joyous morning ran and kissed the grass
And drew his fingers through her sleeping hair,
  And cried, " Before thy flowers are well awake
  Rise, and the lingering darkness from thee shake.

" Before the daisy and the sorrel buy
Their brightness back from that close-folding night,
  Come, and the shadows from thy bosom shake,
  Awake from thy thick sleep, awake, awake ! "

Then the grass of that mounded meadow stirred
Above the Roman bones that may not stir
  Though joyous morning whispered, shouted, sang :
  The grass stirred as that happy music rang.

O, what a wondrous rustling everywhere !
The steady shadows shook and thinned and died,
  The shining grass flashed brightness back for brightness,
  And sleep was gone, and there was heavenly lightness.

As if she had found wings, light as the wind,
The grass flew, bent with the wind, from east to west,
  Chased by one wild grey cloud, and flashing all
  Her dews for happiness to hear morning call. . . .

But even as I stepped out the brightness dimmed,
I saw the fading edge of all delight.
The sober morning waked the drowsy herds,
And there was the old scolding of the birds.

THE BODY

When I had dreamed and dreamed what woman's beauty was,
And how that beauty seen from unseen surely flowed,
I turned and dreamed again, but sleeping now no more:
My eyes shut and my mind with inward vision glowed.

"I did not think!" I cried, seeing that wavering shape
That steadied and then wavered, as a cherry bough in June
Lifts and falls in the wind—each fruit a fruit of light;
And then she stood as clear as an unclouded moon.

As clear and still she stood, moonlike remotely near;
I saw and heard her breathe, I years and years away.
Her light streamed through the years, I saw her clear and still,
Shape and spirit together mingling night with day.

Water falling, falling with the curve of time
Over green-hued rock, then plunging to its pool
Far, far below, a falling spear of light;
Water falling golden from the sun but moon-like cool:

Water has the curve of her shoulder and breast,
  Water falls as straight as her body rose,
Water her brightness has from neck to still feet,
  Water crystal-cold as her cold body flows.

But not water has the colour I saw when I dreamed,
  Nor water such strength has. I joyed to behold
How the blood lit her body with lamps of fire
  And made the flesh glow that like water gleamed cold.

A flame in her arms and in each finger flame,
  And flame in her bosom, flame above, below,
The curve of climbing flame in her waist and her thighs ;
  From foot to head did flame into red flame flow.

I knew how beauty seen from unseen must rise,
  How the body's joy for more than body's use was made.
I knew then how the body is the body of the mind,
  And how the mind's own fire beneath the cool skin
    played.

O shape that once to have seen is to see evermore,
  Falling stream that falls to the deeps of the mind,
Fire that once lit burns while aught burns in the world,
  Foot to head a flame moving in the spirit's wind !

If these eyes could see what these eyes have not seen—
  The inward vision clear—how should I look for joy,
Knowing that beauty's self rose visible in the world
  Over age that darkens, and griefs that destroy ?

STONE TREES

Last night a sword-light in the sky
Flashed a swift terror on the dark.
In that sharp light the fields did lie
Naked and stone-like ; each tree stood
Like a tranced woman, bound and stark.
Far off the wood
With darkness ridged the riven dark.

The cows astonished stared with fear,
And sheep crept to the knees of cows,
And conies to their burrows slid,
And rooks were still in rigid boughs,
And all things else were still or hid.
From all the wood
Came but the owl's hoot, ghostly, clear.

In that cold trance the earth was held
It seemed an age, or time was nought.
Sure never from that stone-like field
Sprang golden corn, nor from those chill
Grey granite trees was music wrought.
In all the wood
Even the tall poplar hung stone still.

It seemed an age, or time was none. . . .
Slowly the earth heaved out of sleep

And shivered, and the trees of stone
Bent and sighed in the gusty wind,
And rain sweet as birds flocking sweep.
    Far off the wood
Rolled the slow thunders on the wind.

From all the wood came no brave bird,
No song broke through the close-fall'n night,
Nor any sound from cowering herd :
Only a dog's long lonely howl
When from the window poured pale light,
    And from the wood
The hoot came ghostly of the owl.

MORE THAN SWEET

The noisy-fire,
The drumming wind,
The creaking trees,
And all that hum
Of summer air
And all the long inquietude
Of breaking seas—

Sweet and delightful are
In loneliness.
But more than these
The quiet light
From the morn's sun
And night's astonished moon,
Falling gently upon breaking seas.

Such quietness
Another beauty is—
Ah, and those stars
So gravely still
More than light, than beauty pour
Upon the strangeness
Of the heart's breaking seas.

WAKING

Lying beneath a hundred seas of sleep
With all those heavy waves flowing over me,
And I unconscious of the rolling night
Until, slowly, from deep to lesser deep
Risen, I felt the wandering seas no longer cover me
But only air and light. . . .

It was a sleep
So dark and so bewilderingly deep
That only death's were deeper or completer,
And none when I awoke stranger or sweeter.
Awake, the strangeness still hung over me
As I with far-strayed senses stared at the light.

I—and who was I?
Saw—oh, with what unaccustomed eye!
The room was strange and everything was strange
Like a strange room entered by wild moonlight;
And yet familiar as the light swept over me
And I rose from the night.

Strange—yet ſtranger I.
And as one climbs from water up to land
Fumbling for weedy ſteps with foot and hand,
So I for yeſterdays whereon to climb
To this remote and newſtruck isle of time.
But I found not myself nor yeſterday—

Until, slowly, from deep to lesser deep
Risen, I felt the seas no longer over me
But only air and light.
Yes, like one clutching at a ring I heard
The household noises as they ſtirred,
And holding faſt I wondered, What were they?

I felt a ſtrange hand lying at my side,
Limp and cool. I touched it and knew it mine.
A murmur, and I remembered how the wind died
In the near aspens. Then
Strange things were no more ſtrange.
I travelled among common thoughts again;

And felt the new-forged links of that ſtrong chain
That binds me to myself, and this to-day
To yeſterday. I heard it rattling near
With a no more aſtonished ear.
And I had loſt the ſtrangeness of that sleep,
No more the long night rolled its great seas over me.

—O, too anxious I!
For in this press of things familiar

I have lost all that clung
Round me awaking of strangeness and such sweetness.
Nothing now is strange
Except the man that woke and then was I.

THE CHAIR

The chair was made
By hands long dead,
Polished by many bodies sitting there,
Until the wood-lines flowed as clean as waves.

Mine sat restless there,
Or propped to stare
Hugged the low kitchen with fond eyes
Or tired eyes that looked at nothing at all.

Or watched from the smoke rise
The flame's snake-eyes,
Up the black-bearded chimney leap ;
Then on my shoulder my dull head would drop.

And half asleep
I heard her creep—
Her never-singing lips shut fast,
Fearing to wake me by a careless breath.

Then, at last
My lids upcast,
Our eyes met, I smiled and she smiled,
And I shut mine again and truly slept.

Was I that child
Fretful, sick, wild ?
Was that you moving soft and soft
Between the rooms if I but played at sleep ?

Or if I laughed,
Talked, cried, or coughed,
You smiled too, just perceptibly,
Or your large kind brown eyes said, O poor boy !

From the fireside I
Could see the narrow sky
Through the barred heavy window panes,
Could hear the sparrows quarrelling round the lilac ;

And hear the heavy rains
Choking in the roof-drains :—
Else of the world I nothing heard
Or nothing remember now. But most I loved

To watch when you stirred
Busily like a bird
At household doings ; with hands floured
Mixing a magic with your cakes and tarts.

O into me, sick, froward,
Yourself you poured ;
In all those days and weeks when I
Sat, slept, woke, whimpered, wondered and slept again.

Now but a memory
To bless and harry me
Remains of you still swathed with care ;
Myself your chief care, sitting by the hearth

Propped in the pillowed chair,
Following you with tired stare,
And my hand following the wood lines
By dead hands smoothed and followed many years.

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

And now, while the dark vast earth shakes and rocks
In this wild dream-like snare of mortal shocks,
How look (I muse) those cold and solitary stars
On these magnificent, cruel wars ?—
Venus, that brushes with her shining lips
(Surely !) the wakeful edge of the world and mocks
With hers its all ungentle wantonness ?—
Or the large moon (pricked by the spars of ships
Creeping and creeping in their restlessness),
The moon pouring strange light on things more strange,
Looks she unheedfully on seas and lands
Trembling with change and fear of counter-change ?

O, not earth trembles, but the stars, the stars !
The sky is shaken and the cool air is quivering.
I cannot look up to the crowded height
And see the fair stars trembling in their light,

For thinking of the starlike spirits of men
Crowding the earth and with great passion quivering :—
Stars quenched in anger and hate, stars sick with pity.
I cannot look up to the naked skies
Because a sorrow on dark midnight lies,
Death, on the living world of sense ;
Because on my own land a shadow lies
That may not rise :
Because from bare grey hillside and rich city
Streams of uncomprehending sadness pour,
Thwarting the eager spirit's pure intelligence. . . .
How look (I muse) those cold and solitary stars
On these magnificent, cruel wars ?

Stars trembled in broad heaven, faint with pity.
An hour to dawn I looked. Beside the trees
Wet mist shaped other trees that branching rose,
Covering the woods and putting out the stars.
There was no murmur on the seas,
No wind blew—only the wandering air that grows
With dawn, then murmurs, sighs,
And dies.
The mist climbed slowly, putting out the stars,
And the earth trembled when the stars were gone ;
And moving strangely everywhere upon
The trembling earth, thickened the watery mist.

And for a time the holy things are veiled.
England's wise thoughts are swords ; her quiet hours
Are trodden underfoot like wayside flowers,
And every English heart is England's wholly.

In ſtarleſs night
A ſerious paſſion ſtreams the heaven with light.
A common beating is in the air—
The heart of England throbbing everywhere.
And all her roads are nerves of noble thought,
And all her people's brain is but her brain;
And all her hiſtory, leſs her ſhame,
Is part of her requickened conſciouſneſs.
Her courage riſes clean again.

Even in victory there hides defeat;
The ſpirit's murdered though the body ſurvives,
Except the cauſe for which a people ſtrives
Burn with no covetous, foul heat.
Fights ſhe againſt herſelf who infamouſly draws
The ſword againſt man's ſecret ſpiritual laws.
But thou, England, becauſe a bitter heel
Hath ſought to bruiſe the brain, the ſenſitive will,
The conſcience of the world,
For this, England, art riſen, and ſhalt fight
Purely through long profoundeſt night,
Making their quarrel thine who are grieved like thee;
And (if to thee the ſtars yield victory)
Tempering their hate of the great foe that hurled
Vainly her ſtrength againſt the conſcience of the world.

I looked again, or dreamed I looked, and ſaw
The ſtars again and all their peace again.
The moving miſt had gone, and ſhining ſtill
The moon went high and pale above the hill.

Not now those lights were trembling in the vast
Ways of the nervy heaven, nor trembled earth:
Profound and calm they gazed as the soft-shod hours
passed.
And with less fear (not with less awe,
Remembering, England, all the blood and pain)
How look, I cried, you stern and solitary stars
On these disastrous wars!

August, 1914.

SHADOWS

The shadow of the lantern on the wall,
The lantern hanging from the twisted beam,
The eye that sees the lantern, shadow and all.

The crackle of the sinking fire in the grate,
The far train, the slow echo in the coombe,
The ear that hears fire, train and echo and all.

The loveliness that is the secret shape
Of once-seen, sweet and oft-dreamed loveliness,
The brain that builds shape, memory, dream and all. . . .

A white moon stares Time's thinning fabric through,
And makes substantial insubstantial seem,
And shapes immortal mortal as a dream;
And eye and brain flicker as shadows do
Restlessly dancing on a cloudy wall.

THE EYE

It is not true that eyes
Save in the trembling eyelids' fall and rise
No meaning have. Did Eve
Hide in dull orbs the Snake's guile, and deceive
Adam with innocent stare?
When David saw how Bathsheba was fair
Burnt in his eyes no fire?
Marked not the men-at-arms his flushed desire
Sudden and swift upbrim,
That not the falling eyelids' cloud could dim?
And when Prince Absalon
Hung by those fatal locks, and help was none,
Under the nerveless lid
How could his father's agony be hid?
He heard the whisper, heard
The hushing, the renewed whisper, the one word:
And then was seen such gaze
As between madness and first wild grief sways,
Till "Absalon!" and no sound
But "Absalon, my son, my son!" crept round.
It is not true that eyes
No meaning have but in the lids' fall and rise.
I have seen terror leap
Up from the spirit's unfathomable deep,
Through unfixed eyeballs stare,
Then shuddering sink back and lie snake-like there:
I have seen honour look
Swift under candid brows, when all else shook,

Pouring in warm light through
Eyes that from inward vision their seeing drew.
And I know the fluttering look
That first love flashes like a bird o'er a brook. . . .
No lid so quick as to give
Speed to the glances that with lightning live.
And I know how the eyes,
Nameless, look on me out of clear dawn skies
And eve's unshadowy light—
Clear lidless eyes of pure immortal Sight,
Sweeping the million-dew'd
Hill pastures and reluming the green-caved wood.

THE EVENING SKY IN MARCH

Rose-bosom'd and rose-limb'd,
With eyes of dazzling bright,
Shakes Venus 'mid the twined boughs of the night;
Rose-limb'd, soft stepping
From low bough to bough,
Shaking the wide-hung starry fruitage—dimmed
Its bloom of snow
By that sole planetary glow.

Venus, avers the astronomer,
Not thus idly dancing goes
Flushing the eternal orchard with wild rose.

She through ether burns
Outpacing planetary earth,
And ere two years triumphantly returns
And again wave-like swelling flows ;
And again her flashing apparition comes and goes.

This we have not seen,
No heavenly courses set,
No flight unpausing through a void serene :
But when eve clears,
Arises Venus as she first uprose
Stepping the shaken boughs among,
And in her bosom glows
The warm light hidden in sunny snows.

She shakes the clustered stars
Lightly, as she goes
Amid the unseen branches of the night,
Rose-limb'd, rose-bosom'd bright.
She leaps : they shake and pale ; she glows—
And who but knows
How the rejoiced heart aches
When Venus all his starry wisdom shakes :

When through his mind
Tossing with random airs of an unearthly wind,
Rose-bosom'd, rose-limb'd,
The mistress of his starry vision arises,
And the boughs glittering sway
And the stars pale away,
And the enlarging heaven glows
As Venus light-foot 'mid the twined branches goes.

MOON BATHERS

Falls from her heaven the Moon, and stars sink burning
Into the sea where blackness rims the sea,
Silently quenched. Faint light that the waves hold
Is only light remaining; yet still gleam
The sands where those now-sleeping young moon bathers
Came dripping out of the sea and from their arms
Shook flakes of light, dancing on the foamy edge
Of quiet waves. They were all things of light
Tossed from the sea to dance under the moon—
Her nuns, dancing within her dying round,
Clear limbs and breasts silvered with moon and waves
And quick with windlike mood and body's joy,
Withdrawn from alien vows, by wave and wind
Lightly absolved and lightly all forgetting.
An hour ago they left. Remains the gleam
Of their late motion on the salt sea-meadow,
As loveliest hues linger when the sun's gone
And float in the heavens and die in reedy pools—
So slowly, who shall say when light is gone?

THE NIGHTINGALES

Musing upon imperishable things,
Honour and love and sorrow, as I walked
I came where water murmured of the hills
That flow from the shoulders of the north
Into the shimmering green pool of the sea.
The unsteady water ran from the hill-shadows,
Itself a frightened shadow hurrying on

Into the starry clearness of May meads
All green and gold and sweet with opening buds.
The dew danced briefly between dusk and sun
But when the willow branches gave no shade
Save to the sleeping fins beneath the banks.
The rising wood waved " Come ! "

Then I passed in,
Plunging through sodden leaves and winter mire
That tardy May dried not, and leapt into
A sudden lake of blue—all sweet and heat
And wavering light—tall bluebells sunny-dappled
Whose pale green stems and folded buds and bells
Shaking out hue and odour drew the mind
Down into deep delights, to lie there swaying
Like amber weed fingered by every tide. . . .
Faded those three grave visitants as I sank—
Honour and love and sorrow—and I watched
Their shadows slow withdrawing through a thin
Spinney beyond the shining lake. The boughs
Raking above netted the azure sky
And snared the clouds that turned and broke away
Torn by the branches or the fretting wind.
So cloud and leaf and air and light and bird
Flowed over me as I swayed sunken deep,
An idle weed fingered by every tide.

It was a nightingale above my head
Answering a nightingale unseen but near,
It was a nightingale that called me from
That sunken streaming of the sensual tide,

With notes like syllables in the silent mind
In silent night uttering things dear or sad.
But the unseen bird answered with the voice
Of smarting love, and crying, " Kiss me now
And bid all thoughts begone but thought of joys
Born of my lips ! " Yes, it was anxious love
Stealing the voice of that hid nightingale
And quickening sleepy memories with each note
Till the notes failed.

Then the first singer poured
His song anew, pure, fresh, sustained—as though
Water-like it might fall all day, all night
Renewed, renewing. And I listening saw
Again those three shades from the spinney come—
Honour and love and sorrow—listening too
While that wild singer uttered yet his notes
So quick, and ranging wide 'tween earth and heaven,
That only thought could follow (even as shadow
Follows the flying feet of light from lake
To cool green hollow of the couchèd hills)—
Then paused, and called and ceased.

How common seemed
That shining pool as I brushed by and shook
The shady dews from bended bells and snapped,
Heedless, the stems. The nightingale was gone,
And I pressed musing through the beamy wood,
And with me those three shadows whispering
One to another words that I could hear,
Half-understanding.

POSSESSION

I saw you,
I held you,
And surely I heard you :
But you were as far as any man living could be.

Though sometimes
I have seen you,
And touched you and heard you,
As together we walked and your sleeve now and then
brushed mine ;

Yet were you then
Farther, farther
Than with body's absence—
But who walks with you now while your thoughts are
here and brush mine ?

The slow waters
Of three oceans,
And the change of seasons,
Between us are but as a new-leafy hawthorn hedge,

And I see you
And hold you :—
But are you yet living,
Or come you now nearer than any man living may be ?

John Freeman

NO MORE THAT ROAD

Now do I know
How newly-dead men go
As ragged ghosts among familiar ways,
Seeking to live again remembered days.

I see one stand,
Vale and mount on either hand,
And saying, " Here I walked and walked with her ;
Here was wheat, and hops here, and charlock there.

" Here was elder,
First-tinted berries of guelder.
Here, long before, wild apple flushed full pink.
Here broke that fire of violets, I think—

" Or was it—yes,
It was there they burned to death.
How all things burned that spring, and burned away,
As spring burned into summer, and then lay

" Glowing and prone,
With summer lovelier grown !
My heels with hers made rhyme upon the flint,
In music voice and silences were blent.

" And now, never,
Never, never, never, never,
Never again ! " And turning away he aches,
And with old mortal sorrow his heart breaks ;

Wishing he were
But one sad hour with her
On that salt road, and hill and vale and cloud,
Oast-houses, orchards, violets, skylarks loud.

O, now I know
How one new-dead must go,
How in his haunted shadow-brain for ever
Sounds the forsaken, " Never, never, never ! "

CATERPILLARS

Of caterpillars Fabre tells how day after day
Around the rim of a vast earth pot they crawled,
Tricked thither as they filed shuffling out one morn
Head to tail when the common hunger called.

Head to tail in a heaving ring day after day,
Night after slow night the starving moments crept,
Each following each, head to tail day after day,
An unbroken ring of hunger—then it was snapt.

I thought of you, long-heaving, horned green caterpillars,
As I lay awake. My thoughts crawled each after each,
Crawling at night each after each on the same nerve,
An unbroken ring of thoughts too sore for speech.

Over and over and over and over again
The same hungry thoughts and the hopeless same regrets,
Over and over the same truths, again and again
In a heaving ring returning the same regrets.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

BY THE WEIR

A scent of Esparto grass—and again I recall
The hour we spent by the weir of the paper-mill
Watching together the curving thunderous fall
Of frothing amber, bemused by the roar until
My mind was as blank as the speckless sheets that wound
On the hot steel ironing-rollers perpetually turning
In the humming dark rooms of the mill: all sense and discerning
By the stunning and dazzling oblivion of hill-waters drowned.

And my heart was empty of memory and hope and desire
Till, rousing, I looked afresh on your face as you gazed—
Behind you an old gnarled fruit-tree in one still fire
Of innumerable flame in the sun of October blazed,
Scarlet and gold that the first white frost would spill
With eddying flicker and patter of dead leaves falling—
I looked on your face, as an outcast from Eden recalling
A vision of Eve as she dallied, bewildered and still,

By the serpent-encircled tree of knowledge that flamed
With gold and scarlet of good and evil, her eyes
Rapt on the river of life: then bright and untamed
By the labour and sorrow and fear of a world that dies
Your ignorant eyes looked up into mine, and I knew
That never our hearts should be one till your young lips had tasted

The core of the bitter-sweet fruit, and wise and toil-wasted
You should stand at my shoulder an outcast from Eden too.

WORLDS

Through the pale green forest of tall bracken-stalks,
Whose interwoven fronds, a jade-green sky,
Above me glimmer infinitely high,
Towards my giant hand a beetle walks
In glistening emerald mail; and as I lie
Watching his progress through huge grassy blades
And over pebble boulders, my own world fades
And shrinks to the vision of a beetle's eye.

Within that forest world of twilight green
Ambushed with unknown perils, one endless day
I travel down the beetle-trail between
Huge glossy boles through green infinity . . .
Till flashes a glimpse of blue sea through the bracken asway,
And my world is again a tumult of windy sea.

FIRE

In each black tile a mimic fire's aglow,
And in the hearthlight old mahogany,
Ripe with stored sunshine that in Mexico
Poured like gold wine into the living tree
Summer on summer through a century,

Burns like a crater in the heart of night :
And all familiar things in the ingle-light
Glow with a secret strange intensity.

And I remember hidden fires that burst
Suddenly from the midnight while men slept,
Long-smouldering rages in the darkness nursed
That to an instant ravening fury leapt,
And the old terror menacing evermore
A crumbling world with fiery molten core.

LOUIS GOLDING

WHAT IS SO ODOROUS HERE?

WHAT is so odorous here where I walk by?
Is it the tangle of firs at the edge of the soft
Smoothed meadow? Or the felled firs perhaps?
Or the abundance of flowers by the hollow bowery laps
Of the showery stream? Or an air from a piled hay-
loft?
None of these, none of these!
There were winds that blew from the farther wolds of
the sky,
That had rustled the tops of tall imperious trees,
That had bent the heads of blue invisible flowers
Like faces bent for the kissing.
But none of these
Is odorous here as Love where I walk by.

A presence, a beauty, whom ear nor hand nor eye
Gross with flesh can perceive—
You shall not know this thing that trembles by
As more than an odour. Grieve,
Lumbering son of Eve,
For not the contours of peaks are so clear to the fleshless eye,
Nor the song of larks so precise to the fleshless ear.
Go by!
Linger not here!

GERALD GOULD

SONNETS

I

I WALK the noisy streets, and all the while
Women and men throng me on every side,
And suddenly falls something to divide
Them the divine from me the vain and vile:
Suddenly I am lonely as an isle
In seas unvoyaged and unverified,
And from me, wave on wave and tide on tide,
The world recedes, and mile on endless mile.

Some call the world a shadow-world: to me
It seems too much a world of flesh and bone,
Of will and action, resolute and free,
Loud as a tempest, solid as a stone.
All these are real and must always be,
And I alone a shadow, I alone.

II

This is the horror that, night after night,
Sits grinning on my pillow—that I meant
To mix the peace of being innocent
With the warm thrill of seeking out delight:
This is the final blasphemy, the blight
On all pure purpose and divine intent—
To dress the selfish thought, the indolent,
In the priest's sable or the angel's white.

For God's sake, if you sin, take pleasure in it,
And do it for the pleasure. Do not say :
" Behold the spirit's liberty !—a minute
Will see the earthly vesture break away
And God shine through." Say : " Here's a sin—I'll sin it ;
And there's the price of sinning—and I'll pay."

III

Our love is hurt, and the bad world goes on
Moving to its conclusion : in a year
This corn now reaped will come again to ear,
The moon will shine as last night the moon shone ;
The tide, whose thought is the moon's thought, will don
The silver livery of subjection. Dear,
Is it not strange that hearts will hope and fear
And break, when our hearts, broken now, are gone ?

If this were true, life's movement would rebel,
And curdle to its source, as blood to the heart
When the cold fires of indignation start
From their obscure lair in the body.—Well,
If for us two to part were just to part,
All years would have one pointless tale to tell.

IV

I am frightened, sweetheart—that's the long and short
Of the bad mind I bear: the scent comes back
Of an unhappy garden gone to wreck,
The flower-beds trampled for an idiot's sport,
A mass of vermin batt'ning there, a mort
Of weeds a-fester, all the green turned black,
And through the sodden glades of loss and lack
The dead winds blown of hate and false report.

There was a music in the early air,
When our young love was virgin as we were,
Ripe for the rose, new to the nightingale;
But now two ghosts walk showing each to each
The empty grace of ceremonious speech,
And I am frightened, and the air is stale.

V

If you were nothing but a sight to share,
A coloured grace, a bird of beauty preening
Pale flames of plumage in the overweening
Light of the insolent and crystal air,
Still to my thought you would be more than fair—
But lo, compassionate, out of glory leaning,
You have called forth the music and the meaning
From doubt, retreat, confusion and despair.

This is because you love me—all this scope
Of happy courage and insurgent hope,
  This simple power to understand and save,
This great contempt of shame, this careless trust
In the divine occasion of our dust—
  This is the strength that love to beauty gave.

VI

The silver mist along the river dims
  The middle landscape and the distant hills ;
  It waxes imperceptibly, and fills
The evening with a sense of dreams and whims,
And great Orion of the starry limbs
  Is blotted out, and melancholy kills
  Earth's wandering hopes with its insistent chills,
And the late birds forget their twilight hymns.

The mist clings in your eyebrows and your hair—
  The silver starry web, the net of tears ;
Your slim and startled body, unaware,
  Clings in my arms for warmth ; a thousand fears
Torment the cloudy texture of the air,
  As, bit by bit, our known world disappears.

VII

I will believe the thing that you have said,
Though chances challenge it and doubts deny,
And every planet moving in the sky
Mock it with music; though my thoughts be led
Back and still back to that unhappy bed
Where my first faith laid itself down to die;
Though I be only such a thing as I,
And all the living laugh, and all the dead.

The ocean has its treasure, and the earth.
I grudge to none his treasure—I have mine.
In solitude and darkness I incline
To the last question of the final worth:
But stronger than all death of light is birth
Of the one human light that burns divine.

VIII

We shall live, maybe, till our world turns grey,
And peace comes on us as our powers grow less,
And scarce we shall distinguish happiness
From the opprobrious process of decay:
Yet, 'mid the droop and pathos of that day,
'Mid songs that cease and wings that acquiesce,
The fading skies shall one last fire confess,
And love in a great sunset burn away.

Or else, perhaps, because we loved so well,
And found love apt to life, the end will prove
A consummation rather than a change;
And, tired in the twilight, we shall spell
Familiar meanings from the text of love,
And only find the words a little strange.

ROBERT GRAVES

STAR-TALK

" Are you awake, Gemelli,
This frosty night ? "
" We'll be awake till reveillé,
Which is sunrise," say the Gemelli,
" It's no good trying to go to sleep :
If there's wine to be got we'll drink it deep,
But rest is hopeless to-night,
But rest is hopeless to-night."

" Are you cold too, poor Pleiads,
This frosty night ? "
" Yes, and so are the Hyads :
See us cuddle and hug," say the Pleiads,
" All six in a ring : it keeps us warm :
We huddle together like birds in a storm :
It's bitter weather to-night,
It's bitter weather to-night."

" What do you hunt, Orion,
This starry night ? "
" The Ram, the Bull, and the Lion
And the Great Bear," says Orion,
" With my starry quiver and beautiful belt
I am trying to find a good thick pelt
To warm my shoulders to-night,
To warm my shoulders to-night."

"Did you hear that, Great She-bear,
This frosty night?"
"Yes, he's talking of stripping *me* bare
Of my own big fur," says the She-bear.
"I'm afraid of the man and his terrible arrow:
The thought of it chills my bones to the marrow,
And the frost so cruel to-night!
And the frost so cruel to-night!"

"How is your trade, Aquarius,
This frosty night?"
"Complaints is many and various
And my feet are cold," says Aquarius,
"There's Venus objects to Dolphin-scales,
And Mars to Crab-spawn found in my pails,
And the pump has frozen to-night,
And the pump has frozen to-night."

TO LUCASTA ON GOING TO THE WARS —FOR THE FOURTH TIME

It doesn't matter what's the cause,
What wrong they say we're righting,
A curse for treaties, bonds and laws,
When we're to do the fighting!
And since we lads are proud and true,
What else remains to do?

Lucasta, when to France your man
Returns his fourth time, hating war,
Yet laughs as calmly as he can
And flings an oath, but says no more,

That is not courage, that's not fear—
Lucasta, he is Fusilier,
And his pride sends him here.

Let statesmen bluster, bark and bray
And so decide who started
This bloody war, and who's to pay,
But he must be stout-hearted,
Must sit and stake with quiet breath,
Playing at cards with Death.

Don't plume yourself he fights for you;
It is no courage, love or hate
That lets us do the things we do;
It's pride that makes the heart so great;
It is not anger, no, nor fear—
Lucasta, he's a Fusilier,
And his pride keeps him there.

NOT DEAD

Walking through trees to cool my heat and pain,
I know that David's with me here again.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Caressingly I stroke
Rough bark of the friendly oak.
A brook goes bubbling by: the voice is his.
Turf burns with pleasant smoke;
I laugh at chaffinch and at primroses.
All that is simple, happy, strong, he is.
Over the whole wood in a little while
Breaks his slow smile.

IN THE WILDERNESS

Christ of His gentleness
Thirsting and hungering,
Walked in the wilderness ;
Soft words of grace He spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bittern's call
From ruined palace wall,
Answered them brotherly.
He held communion
With the she-pelican
Of lonely piety.
Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to His homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbèd stings,
With eager dragon-eyes ;
Great rats on leather wings
And poor blind broken things,
Foul in their miseries.
And ever with Him went,
Of all His wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs—poor innocent—
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scape-goat ;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind Him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

NEGLECTFUL EDWARD

Nancy

EDWARD back from the Indian Sea,
" What have you brought for Nancy ? "

Edward

" A rope of pearls and a gold earring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing.
A carven tooth, a box with a key—— "

Nancy

" God be praised you are back," says she,
" Have you nothing more for your Nancy ? "

Edward

" Long as I sailed the Indian Sea
I gathered all for your fancy :
Toys and silk and jewels I bring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing :
What more can you want, dear girl, from me ? "

Nancy

" God be praised you are back," said she,
" Have you nothing better for Nancy ? "

Edward

" Safe and home from the Indian Sea
And nothing to take your fancy ? "

Nancy

" You can keep your pearls and your gold earring,
And your bird of the East that will not sing,
But, Ned, have you *nothing* more for me
Than heathenish gew-gaw toys ? " says she,
" Have you nothing better for Nancy ? "

THE ROCK BELOW

Comes a muttering from the earth
  Where speedwell grows and daisies grow,
" Pluck these weeds up, root and all,
  Search what hides below."

Root and all I pluck them out ;
  There, close under, I have found
Stumps of thorn with ancient crooks
  Grappled in the ground.

I wrench the thorn-stocks from their hold
  To set a rose-bush in that place ;
Love had pleasure in my roses
  For a summer space.

Yet the bush cries out in grief :
  " Our lowest rootlets turn on rock,
We live in terror of the drought
  Withering crown and stock."

I grow angry with my creature,
Tear it out and see it die;
Far beneath I strike the stone,
Jarring hatefully.

Impotently must I mourn
Roses never to flower again?
Are heart and back too slightly built
For a heaving strain?

Heave shall break my proud back never,
Strain shall never burst my heart:
Steely fingers hook in the crack,
Up the rock shall start.

Now from the deep and fruitful pit
Shoots forth the spring phoenix-tree
Long despaired in this bleak land,
Holds the air with boughs, with bland
Fragrance welcome to the bee,
With fruits of immortality.

A FORCED MUSIC

Of Love he sang, full-hearted one,
But when the song was done
The King demanded more,
Ay, and commanded more.
The boy found nothing for encore,
Words, melodies, none:
Ashamed the song's glad rise and plaintive fall
Had so charmed King and Queen and all.

He sang the same verse once again,
But urging less Love's pain,
With altered time and key
He showed variety
Seemed to refresh the harmony
Of his only strain,
So still the glad rise and the plaintive fall
Could charm the King and Queen and all.

He of his song then wearying ceased,
But was not yet released;
The Queen's request was *More*,
And her behest was *More*,
He played of random notes some score,
He found his rhymes at least—
Then suddenly let his twanging harp down fall
And fled in tears from King and Queen and all.

CHILDREN OF DARKNESS

("In their generation wiser than the children of light")

We spurred our parents to the kiss,
Though doubtfully they shrank from this—
Day had no courage to review
What lusty dark alone might do—
Then were we joined from their caress
In heat of midnight, one from two.

This night-seed knew no discontent,
In certitude his changings went;

Though there were veils about his face,
With forethought, even in that pent place,
Down towards the light his way he bent
To kingdoms of more ample space.

Was Day prime error, that regret
For darkness roars unstifled yet?
That in this freedom by faith won,
Only acts of doubt are done?
That unveiled eyes with tears are wet,
They loathe to gaze upon the sun?

A VILLAGE CONFLICT

The cottage damson laden as could be
Scowls at the Manor-house magnolia tree
That year by year within its thoughtless powers
Yields flowers and leaves and flowers and leaves and flowers,
While the magnolia shudders as in fear,
"*Figurez-vous!* two sackfuls every year!"

"THE GENERAL ELLIOTT"

He fell in victory's fierce pursuit,
Holed through and through with shot,
A sabre sweep had hacked him deep
'Twixt neck and shoulder-knot. . . .

The potman cannot well recall,
The ostler never knew,
Whether his day was Malplaquet,
The Boyne, or Waterloo.

But there he hangs for tavern sign,
With foolish bold regard
For cock and hen and loitering men
And wagons down the yard.

Raised high above the hayseed world
He smokes his painted pipe,
And now surveys the orchard ways,
The damsons clustering ripe.

He sees the churchyard slabs beyond,
Where country neighbours lie,
Their brief renown set lowly down;
His name assaults the sky.

He grips the tankard of brown ale
That spills a generous foam;
Oft-times he drinks, they say, and winks
At drunk men lurching home.

No upstart hero may usurp
That honoured swinging seat;
His seasons pass with pipe and glass
Until the tale's complete.

And paint shall keep his buttons bright
  Though all the world's forgot
Whether he died for England's pride
  By battle, or by pot.

A LOVER SINCE CHILDHOOD

TANGLED in thought am I,
Stumble in speech do I?
Do I blunder and blush for the reason why?
Wander aloof do I,
Lean over gates and sigh,
Making friends with the bee and the butterfly.

If thus and thus I do,
Dazed by the thought of you,
Walking my sorrowful way in the early dew,
My heart cut through and through
In this despair of you,
Starved for a word or a look will my hope renew,

Give then a thought for me
Walking so miserably,
Wanting relief in the friendship of flower or tree,
Do but remember, we
Once could in love agree,
Swallow your pride, let us be as we used to be.

THE PATCHWORK BONNET

Across the room my silent love I throw,
Where you sit sewing in bed by candlelight,
Your young stern profile and industrious fingers
Displayed against the blind in a shadow show,
To Dinda's grave delight.

The needle dips and pokes, the cheerful thread
Runs after, follow-my-leader down the seam :
The patchwork pieces cry for joy together,
O soon to sit as a crown on Dinda's head,
Fulfilment of their dream.

Snippets and odd ends folded by, forgotten,
With camphor on a top shelf, hard to find,
Now wake to this most happy resurrection,
To Dinda playing toss with a reel of cotton
And staring at the blind.

Dinda in sing-song stretching out one hand
Calls for the playthings ; mother does not hear :
Her mind sails far away on a patchwork Ocean,
And all the world must wait till she touches land,
So Dinda cries in fear.

Then Mother turns laughing like a young fairy
And Dinda smiles to see her look so kind,
Calls out again for playthings, playthings, playthings,
And now the shadows make an Umbrian "*Mary Adoring*," on the blind.

THE TREASURE-BOX

Ann in chill moonlight unlocks
Her polished brassbound treasure-box,
Draws a soft breath, prepares to spread
The toys around her on the bed.
She dips for luck : by luck pulls out
A silver pig with ring in snout,
The sort that Christmas puddings yield ;
Next comes a painted nursery shield
Boy-carved ; and then two yellow gloves,
A Limerick wonder that Ann loves,
Leather so thin and joined so well
The pair fold in a walnut shell ;
Here's patchwork that her sister made
With antique silk and flower brocade,
Small faded scraps in memory rich
Joined each to each with feather-stitch ;
Here's cherry and forget-me-not
Ribbon bunched in a great knot ;
A satin purse with pansies on it ;
A Tudor baby's christening bonnet ;
Old Mechlin lace minutely knit
(Some woman's eyes went blind for it) :
And Spanish broideries that pinch
Three blossomed rose-trees to one inch ;
Here are Ann's brooches, simple pins,
A Comet brooch, two Harlequins,
A Posy ; here's a great resplendent
Dove-in-bush Italian pendant ;

A Chelsea gift-bird ; a toy whistle ;
A halfpenny stamped with the Scots thistle ;
A Breguet watch ; a coral string ;
Her mother's thin-worn wedding ring ;
A straw box full of hard smooth sweets ;
A book, the *Poems of John Keats ;*
A chessman ; a pink paper rose ;
A diary dwindling to its close
Nine months ago ; a worsted ball ;
A patchbox ; a stray match—that's all,
All but a few small treasured scraps
Of paper ; things forbid perhaps—
See how slowly Ann unties
The packet where her heartache lies ;
Watch her lips move ; she slants a letter
Up towards the moon to read it better
(The moon may master what he can).
R stands for Richard, A for Ann,
And L . . . at this the old moon blinks
And softly from the window shrinks.

JULIAN GRENFELL

Born 1888

Killed in Action 1915

TO A BLACK GREYHOUND

Shining black in the shining light,
Inky black in the golden sun,
Graceful as the swallow's flight,
Light as swallow, wingèd one,
Swift as driven hurricane,
Double-sinewed stretch and spring,
Muffled thud of flying feet—
See the black dog galloping,
Hear his wild foot-beat.

See him lie when the day is dead,
Black curves curled on the boarded floor.
Sleepy eyes, my sleepy-head—
Eyes that were aflame before.
Gentle now, they burn no more ;
Gentle now and softly warm,
With the fire that made them bright
Hidden—as when after storm
Softly falls the night.

INTO BATTLE

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze ;

And Life is Colour and Warmth and Light,
  And a striving evermore for these ;
And he is dead who will not fight ;
  And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
  Take warmth and life from the glowing earth ;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
  And with the trees to newer birth ;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
  Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
  Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star and the Sisters Seven,
  Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
  They stand to him each one a friend,
They gently speak in the windy weather ;
  They guide to valley and ridges' end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
  And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
  As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, " Brother, brother,
  If this be the last song you shall sing
Sing well, for you may not sing another ;
  Brother, sing."

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,
  Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers ;
  O patient eyes, courageous hearts !

And when the burning moment breaks,
  And all things else are out of mind,
And only Joy of Battle takes
  Him by the throat, and makes him blind—

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
  Not caring much to know, that still,
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
  That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
  And in the air Death moans and sings ;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
  And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

IVOR GURNEY

TO THE POET BEFORE BATTLE

Now, youth, the hour of thy dread passion comes :
Thy lovely things must all be laid away ;
And thou, as others, must face the riven day
Unstirred by rattle of the rolling drums,
Or bugles' strident cry. When mere noise numbs
The sense of being, the fear-sick soul doth sway,
Remember thy great craft's honour, that they may say
Nothing in shame of poets. Then the crumbs
Of praise the little versemen joined to take
Shall be forgotten : then they must know we are,
For all our skill in words, equal in might
And strong of mettle as those we honoured ; make
The name of poet terrible in just war,
And like a crown of honour upon the fight.

SONG OF PAIN AND BEAUTY

To M. M. S.

O may these days of pain,
  These wasted-seeming days,
Somewhere reflower again
  With scent and savour of praise,
Draw out of memory all bitterness
  Of night with Thy sun's rays.

And strengthen Thou in me
  The love of men here found,
And eager charity,
  That, out of difficult ground,
Spring like flowers in barren deserts, or
  Like light, or a lovely sound.

A simpler heart than mine
  Might have seen beauty clear
When I could see no sign
  Of Thee, but only fear.
Strengthen me, make me to see
    Thy beauty always
  In every happening here.

In Trenches, March 1917.

THOUGHTS OF NEW ENGLAND

Gloucester streets walking in autumn twilight,
Past Kineburgh's cottage and old Raven Tavern,
That Hoare he kept, the Puritan, who tired
Or fired, and took a passage in the *Mayflower,*
Gloucester streets walking in frost-clear hour—
Of " Captains Courageous " as a boy read, thinking,
And sea-ports, ships, and all that boy desired . . .
Walt Whitman, history-scraps and Huck Finn's cavern:
My thought went wandering how the New England Folk
Walked twilight now, watched stars steady or blinking—
If thoughts came Eastward as mine Westward went.
Of our " Citizen," the " Massachusetts Times,"

And the boys crying them perhaps about their lanes.
But those no historied ground of Roman or Danes.
What are the streets that have no memories,
That are not underset by ancient rubbish ?
Where gables overhang, and the quarters clang
From Cathedral towers, and the slops or dinner dish,
Hurried a man voids handily into the gutter :
And ghosts haunt the streets and of old troubles mutter.
Where steel and scarlet of the military
And routine use flash vivid momentarily ;
Imagination stricken unaccountably
At full day into pictures not looked for even,
And children from their play by curfew driven.

Are there men of my blood over Atlantic
Wondering there what light is growing thick
By Severn and what real thing Cotswold is ?
Are there men walking slow till tiredness leads in
To write or read till the night's veil grows thin :
Insatiate desiring what hope would win ?
Is the air clear there as Thoreau's prose,
With frost and sparkling water, and day's close
As mild, as soft as shows in " Evangeline " ?
(Since all verse from the air or earth does win).
Do they hear tell of Domesday Book, and not
Think of this Gloucester where the scrivener wrote
Command of reeves first set their lists to begin ?
Do they wish walk at evening where the earls went in
And William : Are there not crowns of England old
That first in Gloucester's Abbey showed their gold ?
Can villas contain men in unloving hold

As here the cornered, the nooked low-ceilinged beetle-browed
Houses cloak man in; or the strict thoroughfares
Stone or asphalt paved ally to man?
Are there great joys in April her high days
For those who cannot high imaginations see
Of other men builded, stirred to a great praise?
Cotswold earthing profound for white material,
Masses of stone gone slender as a silver birch,
Upwards in dazzle to an arching azure.

O where in the new town shall recompense come,
For the market-days, the week-end trouble without measure,
The crowded four ways and cattle markets boom,
And country faces seen often with so much pleasure?

Can New England think deep thoughts of her bye-ways,
Is Abana and Pharpar a balance for
Severn receiving Avon, at her knot of highways,
Her Abbey township, beneath so high a cloud floor?

But nevertheless one would go very willingly
At the year's turn, where Washington or Lincoln walked,
Or praise "Drum Taps" or "This Compost," and hear talked
Speech of Lowell, or Hawthorne, or Holmes and be
Pleased with citizenship Gloucester or Worcester
And companionship of veterans or veterans' sons
Of the Wilderness or Richmond, see the old guns
That set Chattanooga's thronged woods astir;
Or woke terror in steadfastness with red anger.

But not for longer than the strangeness lasted.
Severn yet calls not to be resisted:
And the mix of Dane thoughts, Roman, with Middle-Age
Calls all love out to mark on any page
The glory of Peter's Abbey high up in summer,
Or low in winter's gloom, and a wavering shape,
Are more than is ever seen for foreign comer
To Connecticut, or Staten or Providence with its cape,
Being loveliness and history and height in one.

And there is nothing uprooted that is not changed.
Better to stay and wonder in the half light
How New England saunters where Kipling loved and ranged,
And watch the starling flocks in first autumn flight.

The New World has qualities its own,
But the Old not yet decrepit or withered is grown,
And brick and timber of age five centuries known
Are consolation for poverty enough
Against New York, where they say Opera is brilliant,
And the byeways with five-dollar notes are strown.
The stuff of Liberty is a varying stuff,
But from Grant's men, Lee's men, noblemen should never want.

SMUDGY DAWN

Smudgy dawn scarfed with military colours
Northward, and flowing wider like slow sea water,
Woke in lilac and elm and almost among garden flowers.
Birds a multitude; increasing as it made lighter.

Nothing but I moved by railings there ; slept sweeter
Than kings the country folk in thatch or slate shade,
Peace had the grey West, fleece clouds sure in its power,
Out on much-Severn I thought waves readied for laughter
And the fire-swinger promised behind elm pillars
A day worthy such beginning to come after.

DAWN

Dawn came not surprising, but later widened
To great space and a sea of many colours
With slate and pink and blue above the frightened
Mud fields soiled and heavy with War's colours—
And the guns thumped and threatened,
While the bacon frizzled, and the warm incense heightened,
Drifting in bays and dugouts slowly lightened.
First light bringing the thought what familiar star
There was, of town, farm, cottage, over there, over yonder,
And by day before duty settled awhile to
A companionship of good talk, forgetting night's woe.

GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

FOG

Ten paces round me solid earth stretches,
Moving as I move through impalpable regions
Of space unbounded, unreal, untenanted,
Or tenanted, if tenanted, by powerless anatomies,
Unbreathing hosts, phantom legions.

Ochreous lights hang, stars of an underworld,
In the bronze vapour. Unsupported branches
Trail a thin tapestry. Softly, a footfall!
Passes a shadow, a tall shadow—what memory,
As of a fierce dream, her face blanches?

So to Æneas, moving obscurely
Through the dim groves and Avernian meadows,
So may have shone the white face of Dido,
Silently scorning him, scorning his entreaties—
Then fled away through crowding shadows.

ENVIRONMENT

The faint clouds overrun with gold
More copious than they can hold;
The river, gathering deeper light,
Smoulders upon the verge of night.
The darkening elm-trees by the bank
Stand in a hushed and solemn rank,
But in this world of other worlds' tones,
Men loll at ease and boys throw stones.

MULTIPLICITY

When I invade my secret soul
Thinking to find it clean and whole,
There peep at me from cave and den
So many phantoms of half-men
That I, lest those companions gaunt
My laughing work-a-day self should haunt,
Rush out again to the world, to see
A saner multiplicity.

THE CANDLE

When at a glance my body's eye
Runs from East to West the sky
And gathers in one swift embrace
A million shining miles of space,
Then I do wonder that my mind,
Straining her eyes before, behind—
A trembling candle—should illume
So dusty and so small a room.

RALPH HODGSON

EVE

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees,
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall. . . .
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eva!" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silverly
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite,
Eve, with her body white,
Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips,
Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half way to her lips.

Oh had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere;
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low. . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!

How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain. . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill to-night—
"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.

THE BULL

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high ;

And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Yellowing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world,
All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came :
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood,
Fought and put his prince to shame,
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him there for carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth, and love at last.

When the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills,
And the vultures pecked their quills
And flew into the middle air,

Then this prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,
He saw the blood upon the ground,
And snuffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odours sweet,
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,
All his splendour, all his strength,
All his body's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief,
Half the bull he was before,
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake,
Surly, stupid, half asleep,
Waiting for his heart to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes,—

Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things :
Green savannas, jungles brown,
Battlefields and bellowings,
Bulls undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.

Dreaming things : of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries ;

Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hill and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail ;

How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,
And she turned and ran to him
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day
When her drained and drying paps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more ;

And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong,
And the way was not so long ;

And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

Joined a game of knobby skulls,
With the youngsters of his year,
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear,
Learning how to stand a shock
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him,
And a fierce and wild unrest
Broke the quiet of his breast.

And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow,
And he came to fighting growth,
Beat his bull and won his cow,
And flew his tail and trampled off
Past the tallest, vain enough,

And curved about in splendour full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power,
And they owned him master-horn,
Chiefest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong.

And in all the tramping herd
Not a bull that barred his way,
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look
Dared a second, worse rebuke ;

Not in all the forest wide,
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,
Not another dared him then,
Dared him and again defied ;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more.

Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof
Risked a second time reproof,

Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline ;

Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand,
Not a leopard in the land.

Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills,
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price. . . .

Pity him, this dupe of dream,
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain,
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake ;
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters round the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead.

And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

THE SONG OF HONOUR

I CLIMBED a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep ;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep ;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap ;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away . . .
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done,
Since beauty and the stars were one,
Though none so hard as I.

It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?

The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale,
That season of the year!
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!
I heard them both, and oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men,
And seas and rainbows vie!

I heard the universal choir
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of being sound
From every well of honour found
In human sense and soul :
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beautysprite
Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole—
The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away
Hear flocks of shiny pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day—
The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,

Old beggars hungry too—
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise above their fortune men,
And crown themselves anew,—

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill
With sparking and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white—

The songs of sailors every one
When monstrous tide and tempest run
At ships like bulls at red,
When stately ships are twirled and spun
Like whipping-tops and help there's none
And mighty ships ten thousand ton
Go down like lumps of lead—

And songs of fighters stern as they
At odds with fortune night and day,
Crammed up in cities grim and grey
As thick as bees in hives,
Hosannas of a lowly throng
Who sing unconscious of their song,
Whose lips are in their lives—

And song of some at holy war
With spells and ghouls more dread by far
Than deadly seas and cities are,

Or hordes of quarrelling kings—
The song of fighters great and small,
The song of pretty fighters all,
And high heroic things—

The song of lovers—who knows how
Twitched up from place and time
Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,
A curve or hue of cheek or brow,
Borne up and off from here and now
Into the void sublime!

And crying loves and passions still
In every key from soft to shrill
And numbers never done,
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermission none—

And burst on burst for beauty and
For numbers not behind,
From men whose love of motherhood
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—
And song of some with hearts beside
For men and sorrows far and wide,
Who watch the world with pity and pride
And warm to all mankind—

And endless joyous music rise
From children at their play,

And endless soaring lullabies
From happy, happy mothers' eyes,
And answering crows and baby cries,
How many who shall say !
And many a song as wondrous well
With pangs and sweets intolerable
From lonely hearths too grey to tell,
God knows how utter grey !
And song from many a house of care
When pain has forced a footing there
And there's a Darkness on the stair
Will not be turned away—

And song—that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips,
That makes the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,
As many tempers, moods and minds
As leaves are on a tree,
As many faiths and castes and creeds,
As many human bloods and breeds
As in the world may be ;

The song of each and all who gaze
On Beauty in her naked blaze,
Or see her dimly in a haze,
Or get her light in fitful rays

And tiniest needles even,
The song of all not wholly dark,
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
Too deep for groping Heaven—

And alleluias sweet and clear
And wild with beauty men mishear,
From choirs of song as near and dear
To Paradise as they,
The everlasting pipe and flute
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
And lips deaf men imagine mute
In wood and stone and clay ;

The music of a lion strong
That shakes a hill a whole night long,
A hill as loud as he,
The twitter of a mouse among
Melodious greenery,
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,
The nightingale's—all three,
The song of life that wells and flows
From every leopard, lark and rose
And everything that gleams or goes
Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves
And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime !

Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every chanting sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all, and then although
I caught my flying senses, oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

REASON HAS MOONS

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirror'd on her sea,
Confounding her astronomers,
But, O! delighting me.

Ralph Hodgson

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched blind pit-ponies,
And little hunted hares.

JAMES JOYCE

STRINGS IN THE EARTH

Strings in the earth and air
  Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where
  The willows meet.

There's music along the river,
  For Love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle,
  Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
  With head to the music bent,
And fingers straying
  Upon an instrument.

I HEAR AN ARMY

I hear an army charging upon the land,
  And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
  Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name :
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long green hair :
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair ?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone ?

FRANK KENDON

NOW TO THE WORLD

Now to the world we'll go, my body and I,
Leaving the comfortable nights and days,
The books where wise old men in wise old ways
Wrote down their thoughts of life in years gone by.

Snap up the switch, and let the darkness down ;
Shut the two doors ; deliver up the key.
These things pass on to others ; but for me
They have grown lifeless—I must seek my own.

Picture and book, most taciturn, most dear ;
Hearth where I burned my more ambitious rhymes ;
Room where I dreamed of life a thousand times ;
Scene of so many a joy and fancied fear,

There is no break in this farewell. I go,
Eager as sailors to the uncharted sea—
To wreck or Eldorado—steadfastly ;
Whither, save hence, I do not care nor know.

Here I have laid my little-practised hand
To many a task, as children play, for learning ;
Here I have told my closest secrets, burning
With strong affection for some intimate friend.

Here we have laughed, or argued, man with man,
Till the quick double pulse of midnight sounded ;
Have mocked at Time and Death, and been confounded ;
Have spoken glibly of the race we ran.

And here, in silence, as the impatient morning
Hovered behind the elms, I spoke with Sorrow ;
Clung to wild prophecies of hope to-morrow ;
Prayed to I know not Whom, and met day scorning.

Here it was hard to lose, if only dreams ;
And here, where empty walls return my stare,
A strong imagination, passionate, clear,
Opened a window upon love, it seems :

Better than art, by trembling fingers made,
The portrait of a queen without her crown,
A thing alive, with magic looks cast down,
And moving lips, by cunning truth portrayed. . . .

Close the two doors. Deliver up the key.
There is no break in this farewell to peace—
No frown or smile to signify release—
Snap up the switch ; and let the darkness see !

THE BACKWATER

Though quietness, though quietness of mien
Lay like a mask upon my features, brother,
And though the idle, random, easy words
Fell from our lips, like water dropping slowly
Over the fern leaves on some forest pond—
You read my secret falsely. True, the place
Was peace imbued ; the hour, the time of year,
The smoothed-out leisure, the enormous dreams
Of trees upon the undulating water,

The " world-without-end " cooing of the doves
Hidden in summer's highth (the Milton word
That sounded smoothly of sweet antiquity)—
All these were symbols, fencing in our thoughts
To short tranquillity. The scarcely swaying punt
Hung between verdant roof and dark reflection ;
Up or down, the everlasting heavens
Peered between vaulted boughs upon us there.
If there is cool content on this round earth
Here must her harbour be : here might she come
To refuge from the fierce pulsation of
The noonday meadows, or the noisy streets ;
And like Ophelia, garlanded with flowers,
Float crooning on the stream. And here lay we
Unconscious of the world and its long questions,
Unconscious of the steady lapse of summer,
Unconscious of our breathing even ; of life
Thinking no bitterness ; and dead to death.
The beauty of the river taunted me,
Struck low, preluding chords upon my sense
And left the theme unfinished. It was madness
Fathoming beauty's purpose ; maddening
With our poor human gifts to try to close
A fugue so finely started ; maddening
To read the full solemnity of peace
On trees above, to watch content below
Come stealing by on breathing waves, on winds
To feel content waft down, to fill our eyes
With colours of content, and yet, alas !
Never in either human heart to know
The friendly whisper of the wished-for guest.

I do not know what restless questioning
Ran through your mind in that uneasy ease,
Only you seemed no happier than you dared,
As though the very trees might enviously
Come crashing down if you should quite usurp
Their sole prerogative, and be content.
Nor you, my foster-brother, guessed what lay
Hidden behind my summer languid eyes ;
But seemed at times to envy me my mood.

O there's a gulf abysmal, dark and wide,
For ever fixed between the oldest friends,
And the impossible a soul longs after
Is to build bridges there, where none may build.
I almost hated beauty, I so loved her ;
Night and day courted her, paid secret service
Year upon year before her haunting face,
Thinking no evil of so wonderful
A creature. Here in this quiet place
She stooped and mocked, and grew more fair in mocking.

Knew she what men may never know of us :
The hunger and the endless disappointment,
Desire and its eternal unfulfilment,
Fidelity to hopes that reason sneers at,
This loneliness ? While you, whom I have known
And shared some hopes with, reading all about
In air and fretted sky and foliage,
And in the placid river, deep content—
You, with a heart so haunted, read in me
The symbolism of the summer time

That breathed about us ; envied me indeed
A quiet that both lacked, that both desired
The unwilling hour to teach us, but in vain.

THE IMMIGRANT

When Ruth was old
She'd take her children's children on her knee.
They never wearied to be told
Tales of her girlhood in a far country.

For though her eyes grew dim
Men said of her, " Her heart is always young,"
And Boaz, while she spoke to him,
Loved the faint accent of a foreign tongue.

THE KERNEL

Now that the flush of summer is gone,
And in the lane no flower is seen,
  No hedge in leaf,
No tree in gold or green ;

Now that the golden fruit is stored,
And in the wood no song is heard,
  No merry stir
Of song from any bird ;

Now that the uncompanioned wind
Blows cold across the naked land,
  And, hung in black,
Bare trees like mourners stand ;

Winter reveals through falling rain
A strength which summer had left unseen ;
  Beauty and peace
Which, but for tears, had been in vain,
Which, but for loss, had never been.

SONNET

Now splendidly the earth awakes to vigour,
Music and scent and colour flood the land,
And fields of naked soil no more disfigure
The skylark's sunlit prospects. Buds are fanned
Into a timid verdure, and a haze
Of delicate green imbues the far-away woods ;
The cuckoo has begun to count his days,
The wind-flowers dance by the pale arum hoods ;
Swiftly the sombre winter landscape alters,
More gradual change, and lovelier far than dawn ;
Nothing departs, or fades, and nothing falters,
Only the cold despair of death is flown.
  Courage, impatient heart ; in thy despair
  There shall be wrought a miracle as fair.

Frank Kendon

SONNET

Weary of play, some summer eve, may chance
You will come running in from dewless lawns,
The long day's laughter in your countenance;
(O laughing eyes, where brighter beauty dawns!)
And taking up this book, as one might take
A leaf or flower or blade of grass while speaking,
Read lightly on, a word or two, and make
No meaning of them; little meaning seeking.
There standing, bending head and straying hair,
As leaf by leaf you idly turn these over,
Love, love—the word will meet you everywhere,
And you will laugh, remembering your lover;
And take the book, perhaps, being tired of play,
To wonder and read till daylight dies away.

PALESTINE

Oh, we speak not overmuch
Of the strange lands we have seen,
Our eyes were not for such
Very keen.

And the brightest thing we knew,
In a land of gaudy flowers,
Was a daisy, tipped with dew,
English! Ours!

THE EXCUSE

Beauty of form, of lip, of cheek, of eye, of word, of deed,
Not for thou hast, though thou hast these, I love thee—
this were choice;
Thou art my mistress for no cause: I love because I need;
But praise, to still my questing mind, thy looks, thy grace,
thy voice.

THE ORANGE

Take him this charm.
Though he sits long and languidly to-night,
Wrapped in Lethean thoughtlessness,
He will awake; his eyes will twinkle; bright
Will glow his cheeks; and, warm,
His lively blood will dance away distress.

Then you shall hear
Of violet, vaulted skies, and brazen days;
And catch the whisper in the shadowy groves
Of warmly scented wind that lightly plays
Among the oranges and near
The lapping waves of Yafa this man loves.

Then you shall see
The pale rose mosque, the white-walled dusty street,
Swart copper skin, and gleaming stalwart arm,
Bright-turbaned babes, and laughing teeth, and sweet
Rachels whose modesty
Droops over tremulous eyes. . . . Take him this charm.

Frank Kendon

I SPEND MY DAYS VAINLY

I SPEND my days vainly,
Not in delight;
Though the world is elate,
And tastes her joys finely.

Here wrapped in slow musing
Lies my dark mind,
To no music attuned
Save its own, and despising

The lark for remoteness,
The thrush for bold lying,
The soft wind for blowing,
And the round sun for brightness.

O tarry for me, sweet;
I shall stir, I shall wake!
And the melody you seek
Shall be lovely, though late.

WILLIAM KERR

COUNTING SHEEP

Half-awake I walked
A dimly-seen sweet hawthorn lane
Until sleep came ;
I lingered at a gate and talked
A little with a lonely lamb.
He told me of the great still night,
Of calm starlight,
And of the lady moon, who'd stoop
For a kiss sometimes ;
Of grass as soft as sleep, of rhymes
The tired flowers sang :
The ageless April tales
Of how, when sheep grew old,
As their faith told,
They went without a pang
To far green fields, where fall
Perpetual streams that call
To deathless nightingales.
And then I saw, hard by,
A shepherd lad with shining eyes,
And round him, gathered one by one
Countless sheep, snow-white ;
More and more they crowded
With tender cries,
Till all the field was full
Of voices and of coming sheep.

Countless they came, and I
Watched, until deep
As dream-fields lie
I was asleep.

THE AUDIT

Mere living wears the most of life away :
Even the lilies take thought for many things,
For frost in April and for drought in May,
And from no careless heart the skylark sings.

Those cheap utilities of rain and sun
Describe the foolish circle of our years,
Until death takes us, doing all undone,
And there's an end at last to hopes and fears.

Though song be hollow and no dreams come true,
Still songs and dreams are better than the truth :
But there's so much to get, so much to do,
Mary must drudge like Martha, dainty Ruth

Forget the morning music in the corn,
And Rachel grudge when Leah's boys are born.

D. H. LAWRENCE

SERVICE OF ALL THE DEAD

Between the avenues of cypresses,
All in their scarlet cloaks, and surplices
Of linen, go the chaunting choristers,
The priests in gold and black, the villagers.

And all along the path to the cemetery
The round, dark heads of men crowd silently,
And black-scarved faces of women-folk, wistfully
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands;
And at the foot of a grave a woman kneels
With pale shut face, and neither hears nor feels

The coming of the chaunting choristers
Between the avenues of cypresses,
The silence of the many villagers,
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

KANGAROO

In the northern hemisphere
Life seems to leap at the air, or skim under the wind
Like stags on rocky ground, or pawing horses, or spring
scut-tailed rabbits.

Or else rush horizontal to charge at the sky's horizon,
Like bulls or bisons or wild pigs.

Or slip like water slippery towards its ends,
As foxes, stoats, and wolves, and prairie dogs.

Only mice, and moles, and rats, and badgers, and beavers, and perhaps bears,
Seem belly-plumbed to the earth's mid-navel.
Or frogs that when they leap come flop, and flop to the centre of the earth.

But the yellow antipodal Kangaroo, when she sits up,
Who can unseat her, like a liquid drop that is heavy, and just touches earth?
The downward drip.
The down-urge.
So much denser than cold-blooded frogs.

Delicate mother Kangaroo
Sitting up there rabbit-wise, but huge, plumb-weighted,
And lifting her beautiful slender face, oh! so much more gently and finely lined than a rabbit's, or than a hare's,
Lifting her face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop, which she loves, sensitive mother Kangaroo.

Her full antipodal eyes, so dark,
Her sensitive, long, pure-bred face.
So big and quiet and remote, having watched so many empty dawns in silent Australia.

Her little loose hands, and drooping Victorian shoulders.
And then her great weight below the waist, her vast pale belly
With a thin young yellow little paw hanging out, and straggle of a thin long ear, like ribbon,
Like a funny trimming to the middle of her belly, thin little dangle of an immature paw, and one thin ear.
Her belly, her big haunches
And in addition the great muscular python stretch of her tail.

There, she shan't have any more peppermint drops.
So she wistfully, sensitively sniffs the air, and then turns and goes off in slow sad leaps
On the long flat skis of her legs,
Steered and propelled by that steel-strong snake of a tail.

Stops again, half turns, inquisitive to look back.
While something stirs quickly in her belly, and a lean little face comes out, as from a window,
Peaked, and a bit dismayed,
Only to disappear again quickly away from the sight of the world, to snuggle down in the warmth,
Leaving the trail of a different paw hanging out.

Still she watches with eternal, cocked wistfulness!
How full her eyes are, like the full, fathomless shining eyes of an Australian black-boy
Who has been lost so many centuries on the margins of existence!

She watches with insatiable wistfulness.
Untold centuries of watching for something to come,
For a new signal from life, in that silent lost land of the South,
Where nothing bites but insects and snakes and the sun, small life.
Where no bull roared, no cow ever lowed, no stag cried, no leopard screeched, no lion coughed, no dog barked,
But all was silent except for parrots occasionally, in the haunted blue bush.

Wistfully watching, with wonderful liquid eyes.
And all her weight, all her blood, dripping sackwise down towards the earth's centre,
And the live little one taking in its paw at the door of her belly.

Leap then, and come down on the line that draws to the earth's deep, heavy centre.

SNAKE

A SNAKE came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth brown, earth golden from the burning burning bowels of the earth.
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But I must confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink
at my water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth.

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?
Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:
If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air,
so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste,
Writhed like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.
And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the albatross,
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the under-world,
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
Of life. . . . . .
And I have something to expiate;
A pettiness.

MAN AND BAT

When I went into my room, at mid-morning,
Say ten o'clock. . . .
My room, a crash-box over that great stone rattle
The Via de' Bardi. . . .

When I went into my room at mid-morning
Why? . . . a bird!

A bird
Flying round the room in insane circles.

In insane circles!
. . . A bat!

A disgusting bat
At mid-morning! . . .

Out! Go out!

Round and round and round
With a twitchy, nervous, intolerable flight,
And a neurasthenic lunge,
And an impure frenzy;
A bat, big as a swallow.

Out, out of my room !

The venetian shutters I push wide
To the free, calm upper air ;
Loop back the curtains. . . .

Now, out, out from my room !

So to drive him out, flicking with my white handkerchief : *Go !*
But he will not.

Round and round and round
In an impure haste,
Fumbling, a beast in air,
And stumbling, lunging and touching the walls, the bell-wires
About my room !
Always refusing to go out into the air
Above that crash-gulf of the Via de' Bardi,
Yet blind with frenzy, with cluttered fear.

At last he swerved into the window bay,
But blew back, as if an incoming wind blew him in again.
A strong inrushing wind.

And round and round and round !
Blundering more insane, and leaping, in throbs, to clutch at a corner,
At a wire, at a bell-rope :

On and on, watched relentless by me, round and round
in my room,
Round and round and dithering with tiredness and haste
and increasing delirium
Flicker-splashing round my room.

I would not let him rest;
Not one instant cleave, cling like a blot with his breast
to the wall
In an obscure corner,
Not an instant!

I flicked him on,
Trying to drive him through the window.
Again he swerved into the window bay
And I ran forward to frighten him forth.
But he rose, and from a terror worse than me he flew past me
Back into my room, and round, round, round in my room,
Clutch, cleave, stagger,
Dropping about the air,
Getting tired.

Something seemed to blow him back from the window
Every time he swerved at it;
Back on a strange parabola, then round, round, dizzy in
my room.

He *could* not go out,
I also realised. . . .
It was the light of day which he could not enter,
Any more than I could enter the white-hot door of a
blast-furnace.

He could not plunge into the daylight that streamed at
the window.
It was asking too much of his nature.
Worse even than the hideous terror of me with my hand-
kerchief,
Saying: *Out, go out!*
Was the horror of white daylight in the window!

So I switched on the electric light, thinking: *Now*
The outside will seem brown. . . .

But no.
The outside did not seem brown.
And he did not mind the yellow electric light.

Silent!
He was having a silent rest.
But never!
Not in my room.

Round and round and round
Near the ceiling as if in a web,
Staggering;
Plunging, falling out of the web,
Broken in heaviness,
Lunging blindly,
Heavier;
And clutching, clutching for one second's pause,
Always, as if for one drop of rest,
One little drop.

And I!
Never, I say. . . .
Go out!

Flying slower,
Seeming to stumble, to fall in air.
Blind-weary.

Yet never able to pass the whiteness of light into freedom. . . .
A bird would have dashed through, come what might.

Full, sink, lurch, and round and round
Flicker, flicker-heavy;
Even wings heavy:
And cleave in a high corner for a second, like a clot, also a prayer.

But no.
Out, you beast.

Till he fell in a corner, palpitating, spent.
And there, a clot, he squatted and looked at me.
With sticking-out, bead-berry eyes, black,
And improper derisive ears,
And shut wings,
And brown, furry body.
Brown, nut-brown, fine fur!
But it might as well have been a hair on a spider; thing
With long, black-paper ears.

So, a dilemma!
He squatted there like something unclean.

No, he must not squat, nor hang, obscene, in my room!

Yet nothing on earth will give him courage to pass the sweet fire of day.

What then?
Hit him and kill him and throw him away?

Nay,
I didn't create him.
Let the God that created him be responsible for his death. . . .
Only, in the bright day, I will not have this clot in my room.
Let the God who is maker of bats watch with them in their unclean corners. . . .
I admit a God in every crevice,
But not bats in my room;
Nor the God of bats, while the sun shines.
So out, out you brute! . . .
And he lunged, flight-heavy, away from me, sideways, *a sghembo!*
And round and round and round my room, a clot with wings,
Impure even in weariness.

Wings dark skinny and flapping the air,
Lost their flicker.
Spent.

He fell again with a little thud
Near the curtain on the floor.
And there lay.

Ah death, death
You are no solution!
Bats must be bats.

Only life has a way out.
And the human soul is fated to wide-eyed responsibility
In life.

So I picked him up in a flannel jacket,
Well covered, lest he should bite me.
For I would have had to kill him if he'd bitten me, the impure one. . . .
And he hardly stirred in my hand, muffled up.

Hastily, I shook him out of the window.

And away he went!
Fear craven in his tail.
Great haste, and straight, almost bird straight above the Via de' Bardi.
Above that crash-gulf of exploding whips,
Towards the Borgo San Jacopo.

And now, at evening, as he flickers over the river,
Dipping with petty triumphant flight, and tittering over the sun's departure,

I believe he chirps, pipistrello, seeing me here on this terrace writing:
There he sits, the long loud one!
But I am greater than he . . . .
I escaped him. . . .

SEVEN SEALS

Since this is the last night I keep you home,
Come, I will consecrate you for the journey.

Rather I had you would not go. Nay come,
I will not again reproach you. Lie back
And let me love you a long time ere you go.
For you are sullen-hearted still, and lack
The will to love me. But even so
I will set a seal upon you from my lip,
Will set a guard of honour at each door,
Seal up each channel out of which might slip
Your love for me.

I kiss your mouth. Ah, love,
Could I but seal its ruddy, shining spring
Of passion, parch it up, destroy, remove
Its softly-stirring crimson welling-up
Of kisses! Oh, help me, God! Here at the source
I'd lie for ever drinking and drawing in
Your fountains, as heaven drinks from out their course
The floods.

I close your ears with kisses
And seal your nostrils ; and round your neck you'll wear—
Nay, let me work—a delicate chain of kisses.
Like beads they go around, and not one misses
To touch its fellow on either side.

And there
Full mid-between the champaign of your breast
I place a great and burning seal of love
Like a dark rose, a mystery of rest
On the slow bubbling of your rhythmic heart.

Nay, I persist, and very faith shall keep
You integral to me. Each door, each mystic port
Of egress from you I will seal and steep
In perfect chrism.
Now it is done. The mort
Will sound in heaven before it is undone.

But let me finish what I have begun
And shirt you now invulnerable in the mail
Of iron kisses, kisses linked like steel.
Put greaves upon your thighs and knees, and frail
Webbing of steel on your feet. So you shall feel
Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven
Great seals upon your outgoings, and woven
Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly
Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

Killed in Action 1917

IN FRANCE

The silence of maternal hills
Is round me in my evening dreams;
And round me music-making rills
And mingling waves of pastoral streams.

Whatever way I turn I find
The path is old unto me still.
The hills of home are in my mind,
And there I wander as I will.

February 3rd, 1917.

THOMAS MACDONAGH

He shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

Francis Ledwidge

IN SEPTEMBER

STILL are the meadowlands, and still
Ripens the upland corn,
And over the brown gradual hill
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown
With silent hearts now call,
My rose of youth is overblown
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds
That leave the rain and grey,
I hear the music of the words
My lute can never say.

E. R. R. LINKLATER

THE FAITHLESS SHEPHERD

With nice observance of the rules
And precepts of the pastoral schools,
A shepherdess, as fair as pure,
Beneath a hedgerow sat demure.
With conscious grace before her feet
Her swain lay faithfully supine,
Essaying neatly to combine
Positions patently discreet
With rustic notions of design.

Hedge-high the wild small roses grew
To kiss the breeze, and yet there blew
In Phœbe's cheek a wilder rose
That Corin watered with his woes.

Of sighs and chosen words he twined
A cunning thread to trap and bind
The bird that sang in Phœbe's heart;
With careful hand he spread the lime,
The tuneful tears, the weary rhyme,
Of tattered, patched Italian art,
And tirelessly reset the snare
Of piping music's gusty ware.

Yet loving he observed the rules
Laid down for us in pastoral schools,
And all advantages eschewed
Of Phœbe's solitude.

And still in spite of poetry
And this too subtle courtesy,
She tarried coldly continent;
No signal of surrender flamed,
Though orthodoxy clearly claimed
A maidenly consent.

There stood in shade of friendly grass
A jug with sweet cool wine a-brim,
And weary of his Lover's Mass,
Tall Corin took the sacrament
A readier chalice offered him.
The honest wine first cooled his head,
And led back laughter that had fled
The solemn ritual of love.

And in a little while
The countryside, that once had been
A placidly enamelled screen,
He saw as mile on waving mile
Of grass that grew more richly green,
Of flowers and jolly rotund hills,
Of deeply chuckling meadow-rills,
And marching roads: while far above
The portly clouds that statelily
Had stalked across the level sky,
Were tripped and tumbled by the wind
In coltish merriment.

Till, peering through the wine, half-blind
And swimming up in slow ascent,

The bottom of the honest jug
Appears like Truth, all soft and snug
And pinkly naked in her well.

Then Corin laughs. His glances dwell
Once more on Phœbe, and he seeks
The wild-rose flaming in her cheek.
And now no more on pilgrim knees
He pleads a docile love and meek,
But boldly clips her in his arms
And quiets her modest faint alarms
With kiss on eager kiss that sips
The rose-red nectar of her lips.
And now his love grows kind to feel
The soft white arms that slowly steal
About his neck. Now Phœbe's kisses,
Each one Love's virgin young Ulysses,
In turn seek rest on Corin's lips. . . .

A vagrant cloud for mockery
Slid solemnly athwart the sun,
And in the leaves, half breathlessly,
A tiny breeze hid shivering.
Hedge-high the small wild roses flare,
Whose petals, gravely curtseying,
Blow softly down on Phœbe's hair. . . .

And still the bottom of the jug,
With innocent unwinking eye,
Stared nakedly into the sky.

SYLVIA LYND

FAREWELL IN FEBRUARY

I

THROUGH the small window on the ſtair
As I leant out to take the air
At the ſlow-fading end of day,
I heard the thruſhes ſing and ſay :
This is the end of winter.

This is the end, I thought, although
The northward fields are rimmed with ſnow,
And like a thruſh's breaſt the down
Is ſpeckled o'er with white and brown ;
Though no ſharp plough the furrow grooves,
Though ſtill the ſeagulls' white-winged droves
Flurry above the inland plain—
Winter withdraws from earth again—
This is the end of winter.

Since then, I thought, I ſhall not ſee
New buds alight in every tree,
Nor watch the ſun at evenfall
Put gold upon my bedroom wall,
And no more at this window lean
To feel the ſweet air preſſing in—
Here for a little while I'll reſt
And mark the garden's every creſt,
That in my mind when I am gone
Its birds and boughs may ſtill live on.

II

This place that I'll not see again
Shall wear its seasons in my brain ;
Clothed in fine weather it shall shine
Thorough what journeys may be mine,
Nor drought nor deluge shall destroy
What in my fancy I enjoy.
Here not a seed on barren ground
Shall fall, and not a grub be found.
All happy weathers, seasons, hours,
Entangled still with fruit and flowers,
In gay confusion shall display
The charms of Michaelmas or May.
Fresh leaves and blossoms I'll set in it
And plums shall ripened be next minute ;
Through scarlet currants that appear
Like earrings in a lady's ear
Shall slant the beams of morning sun—
Next pinks breathe sweet and day be done :
There be the moon and there tiptoe
The stars among the branches go,
And that young jasmine by the wall
Shall grow a flowery waterfall.

So rich in crops, so quickly weeded,
Where never fork or hoe is needed,
This place I leave beneath grey skies
Shall be my spirit's paradise.

III

What once was there and what there never
Who from thought's thicket can dissever ?
Through the green branches looking down
Into this Eden of my own,
Unchanging phantoms I shall see
Myself and you who walked with me,
Two skipping children long since grown,
A cat long dead and birds long flown,
And so substantial I shall find
The dreams that living leaves behind ;
All hopes, all loves, all ecstasies
Stolen from life, I shall find these.
What memory cannot paint, be sure
Fancy will fashion more secure.

Those woven boughs, that silken sky,
Regret nor winter will come nigh ;
Beyond the reach of mortal grief
Its every shining flower and leaf ;
Growing but fading not shall be
The span of its mortality,
And time's sad progress shall be stayed
By the perfection of a shade.

LOOKING AT THE STARS

Now, by night, while all is still,
Orion with a flaming heel,

Marches on the western hill :—
Constellations with him wheel

Westward, ever westward moving,
Many a hero, many a god,
Fierce in war and fierce in loving :—
Men in ancient times who trod

This strange planet knew and named
Their great deeds, proclaimed their glories,
While the white stars blinked and flamed :—
Shades of shades those men ; but stories

Live when speaking lips are dumb :—
Is it their night-haunting breath
Across unnumbered ages come,
Breathes in my hair the chill of death ?

P. H. B. LYON

COMMUNION

At the waking of birds,
In the hush of morning,
We whisper the words
Of praise and repentance;
The sun from the East
Stains pillar and chancel,
The voice of the priest
Comes soft-toned and solemn;
And out in the world
The first dews are trampled,
The dawn-mists are furled,
The cows go from milking,
A cock crows loud
From the farmyard midden;
But here in a cloud
Of worship and silence
We keep the old tryst,
We serve the commandment
Of Jesus the Christ;
Desiring, receiving—
To the carol of birds,
In a world just waking—
The comfortable words
Of Jesus the Saviour.

"NOW TO BE STILL AND REST"

Now to be still and rest, while the heart remembers
All that it learned and loved in the days long past,
To stoop and warm our hands at the fallen embers,
Glad to have come to the long way's end at last.

Now to awake, and feel no regret at waking,
Knowing the shadowy days are white again,
To draw our curtains and watch the slow dawn breaking
Silver and grey on English field and lane.

Now to fulfil our dreams, in woods and meadows
Treading the well-loved paths,—to pause and cry
"So, even so I remember it,"—seeing the shadows
Weave on the distant hills their tapestry.

Now to rejoice in children and join their laughter,
Tuning our hearts once more to the fairy strain,—
To hear our names on voices we love, and after
Turn with a smile to sleep and our dreams again.

Then—with a newborn strength, the sweet rest over,
Gladly to follow the great white road once more,
To work with a song on our lips and the heart of a lover,
Building the city of peace on the wastes of war.

ENVOI

Earth puts her colours by,
And veils her in one whispering cloak of shadow ;
Green goes from the meadow ;
Red leaves and flowers and shining pools are shrouded ;
A few stars sail upon a windy sky,
And the moon is clouded.

The delicate music, traced
In and out of the soft lights and the laughter,
Is hushed, round ledge and rafter
The last faint echoes into silence creeping ;
The harp is mute, the violins encased,
And the singers sleeping.

So, now my songs are done,
Leave me to night awhile and the starlight gleaming,
To silence and sweet dreaming,
Here where no music calls, no beauty shakes me ;
Till in my heart the birds sing to the sun
And the new dawn wakes me.

ROSE · MACAULAY

F F

TRINITY SUNDAY

As I walked in Petty Cury on Trinity Day,
While the cuckoos in the fields did shout,
Right through the city stole the breath of the may,
And the scarlet doctors all about

Lifted up their heads to snuff at the breeze,
And forgot they were bound for great St. Mary's
To listen to a sermon from the Master of Caius,
And " How balmy," they said, " the air is ! "

And balmy it was ; and the sweet bells rocking
Shook it till it rent in two
And fell, a torn veil ; and like maniacs mocking
The wild things from without passed through.

Wild wet things that swam in King's Parade
The days it was a marshy fen,
Through the rent veil they did sprawl and wade
Blind bog-beasts and Ugrian men.

And the city was not. (For cities are wrought
Of the stuff of the world's live brain.
Cities are thin veils, woven of thought,
And thought, breaking, rends them in twain.)

And the fens were not. (For fens are dreams
  Dreamt by a race long dead ;
And the earth is naught, and the sun but seems ;
  And so those who know have said.)

So veil beyond veil illimitably lifted :
  And I saw the world's naked face,
Before, reeling and baffled and blind, I drifted
  Back within the bounds of space.

. . . . . .

I have forgot the unforgettable.
  All of honey and milk the air is.
God send I do forget. . . . The merry winds swell
  In the scarlet gowns bound for St. Mary's.

NEW YEAR 1918

Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new,
For time, caught on the ancient wheel of change,
Spins round, and round, and round ; and nothing is strange,
  Or shall amaze
Mankind, in whom the heritage of all days
Stirs suddenly, as dreams half remembered do.
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.

  Pale, pale he stands,
Carrying world-odd gifts in his cold hands—
  Winds and the sky's keen blue,
  Woods and the wild cuckoo,

Lovers, and loveliness, and death, and life.
Does he hold Peace, the derelict babe of strife
And of wan penury?
Will she ride in on the wash of the storming sea,
Be dropped at last by its ebb on the trampled sands,
To lie there helplessly?

War's orphan, she,
And ungrown mother of wars yet to be,
She smiles and croons for a space between these two.
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.

Dreams and desires and hopes does the year hold.
Bad and good, tinsel and gold,
Lying and true,
One and all they are old, so old,
They were dreamt and desired and told
By the first men swinging in trees by strong tails.
Not till the last man fails,
And the sun's fire pales,
Shall the embers of these flaming dreams be cold.
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.

Turn, turn the page!
It turns, and we, and the squirrel in his cage,
And the sun, and the moon, and the moon's salt tide;
And the earth turns too.
As flies on the rim of a wheel we ride
From age round to age;
And the dreams and the toys which make our pride
Are an old heritage,

Worn properties from some primeval stage
All curtained now from view. . . .
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.

Go through the door.
You shall find nothing that has not been before,
Nothing so bitter it will not be once more.
All this our sad estate was known of yore,
In old worlds red with pain,
Borne by hearts sullen and sick as ours, through
Desperate, forgotten, other winters, when
Tears fell, and hopes, and men,
And crowns and cities, and blood, on a trampled plain,
And nations, and honour, and God, and always rain. . . .
And honour and hope and God rose up again,
And like trees nations grew. . . .
Whatever the year brings, he brings nothing new.

Should some year suddenly bring something new,
We should grope as lost children without a clue.
We should drift all amazed through such a queer
And unimagined year.
Riding uncharted seas, a derelict crew,
Whistling in vain for the old winds that blew
From the old skies, we should seek far and near
Some mark by which to steer,
And some known port, that we might sail thereto.
Black nightmare and blind fear
Shall seize and hold him who
In some year suddenly finds something new.

ALL SOULS' DAY 1916

THE men are black as the cursed night,
Or brown as *café au lait*,
Or golden amber, like pale sherry,
Or blind to the blowing day,
Or, for some ill deed they have wrought,
Condemned to limp alway.

They talk with the tongues of aliens ;
They shake in the keen breeze.
(The keen breeze searches the chill bones
Of Cambridge men, not these,
Of Cambridge men keeping their terms
In trenches overseas ;
And of colder Cambridge men who lie
In No Man's Land at ease.)

. . . . . .

Like thieves about the grey city
The brown men creep, afraid,
Creep down St. Edward's passage way,
And lurk there in the shade,
As if they found no room to walk
To-day, in King's Parade.
Yesterday was All Hallows',
And bright with the saints' beams.
To-day the leaves blow down, blow down,
Through tears the sun gleams.
And O, to-day the young men come,
Washed on a drift of dreams.

There's a light whisper of laughter
Down Trinity Street,
A flutter of gowns in the thronged Cury,
And on Pease Hill beat,
Like waves striking a mist-drowned shore,
An army of feet.

Cambridge town is carried and stormed,
And the black, lame, and blind,
Creep perplexed through the blithe city
That is grown gay and unkind. . . .

. . . . . .

The strange tide will ebb again
Before the dawn star,
Ebb and drift, whispering
Out beyond the bar,
Back to the shores (more near than France)
Where the Cambridge men are.
The blacks will walk the empty streets,
Securely at their ease;
They'll walk, gibbering black men's speech,
'Twixt the Great Gate and Caius;
But ever they'll pale, as black men pale,
A-wilting in the breeze,
To think how Cambridge called her own
From beyond the bitter seas.

THOMAS MACDONAGH

Born 1878

Executed after Easter Week Rising 1916

INSCRIPTION ON A RUIN

I stood beside the postern here,
  High up above the trampling sea,
In shadow, shrinking from the spear
  Of light, not daring hence to flee.

The moon beyond the western cliff
  Had passed, and let the shadow fall,
Across the water to the skiff
  That came on to the castle wall.

I heard below murmur of words
  Not loud, the splash upon the strand,
And the long cry of darkling birds.
  The ivory horn fell from my hand.

THE NIGHT HUNT

In the morning, in the dark,
When the stars begin to blunt,
By the wall of Barna Park
Dogs I heard and saw them hunt;
All the parish dogs were there,
All the dogs for miles around,
Teeming up behind a hare,
In the dark, without a sound.

How I heard I scarce can tell —
'Twas a patter in the grass—
And I did not see them well
Come across the dark and pass ;
Yet I saw them and I knew
Spearman's dog and Spellman's dog
And, beside my own dog too,
Leamy's from the Island Bog.

In the morning when the sun
Burnished all the green to gorse,
I went out to take a run
Round the bog upon my horse ;
And my dog that had been sleeping
In the heat beside the door
Left his yawning and went leaping
On a hundred yards before.

Through the village street we passed--
Not a dog there raised a snout—
Through the street and out at last
On the white bog road and out
Over Barna Park full pace,
Over to the silver stream,
Horse and dog in happy race,
Rider between thought and dream.

By the stream, at Leamy's house,
Lay a dog—my pace I curbed—
But our coming did not rouse
Him from drowsing undisturbed ;

And my dog, as unaware
Of the other, dropped beside
And went running by me there
With my horse's slackened stride.

Yet by something, by a twitch
Of the sleeper's eye, a look
From the runner, something which
Little chords of feeling shook,
I was conscious that a thought
Shuddered through the silent deep
Of a secret—I had caught
Something I had known in sleep.

JOHN MASEFIELD

C. L. M.

In the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man.
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth.
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave
She cannot see the life she gave.
For all her love, she cannot tell
Whether I use it ill or well,
Nor knock at dusty doors to find
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind
My debt to her and womankind?
What woman's happier life repays
Her for those months of wretched days?
For all my mouthless body leeched
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reached?

What have I done, or tried, or said
In thanks to that dear woman dead?
Men triumph over women still,
Men trample women's rights at will,
And man's lust roves the world untamed.

. . . . . .

O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed.

WHAT AM I, LIFE?

What am I, Life? A thing of watery salt
Held in cohesion by unresting cells
Which work they know not why, which never halt,
Myself unwitting where their master dwells.
I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin;
A world which uses me as I use them,
Nor do I know which end or which begin,
Nor them to praise, which pamper, which condemn.
So, like a marvel in a marvel set,
I answer to the vast, as wave by wave
The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,
Or the full moon comes swimming from her cave,
Or the great sun comes north, this myriad I
Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering why.

THE RACER

I saw the racer coming to the jump,
Staring with fiery eyeballs as he rusht,
I heard the blood within his body thump,
I saw him launch, I heard the toppings crusht.

And as he landed I beheld his soul
  Kindle, because, in front, he saw the Straight
With all its thousands roaring at the goal,
  He laughed, he took the moment for his mate.

Would that the passionate moods on which we ride
  Might kindle thus to oneness with the will;
Would we might see the end to which we ſtride,
  And feel, not ſtrain, in ſtruggle, only thrill.

And laugh like him and know in all our nerves
Beauty, the spirit ſcattering duſt and turves.

THE RIDER AT THE GATE

A WINDY night was blowing on Rome,
The creſſets guttered on Cæsar's home,
The fish-boats, moored at the bridge, were breaking
The rush of the river to yellow foam.

The hinges whined to the ſhutters ſhaking,
When clip-clop-clep came a horſe-hoof raking
The ſtones of the road at Cæsar's gate;
The ſpear-butts jarred at the guard's awaking.

"Who goes there?" ſaid the guard at the gate.
"What is the news, that you ride ſo late?"
"News moſt preſſing, that muſt be ſpoken
To Cæsar alone, and that cannot wait."

" The Cæsar sleeps ; you must show a token
That the news suffice that he be awoken.
What is the news, and whence do you come ?
For no light cause may his sleep be broken."

" Out of the dark of the sands I come,
From the dark of death, with news from Rome.
A word so fell that it must be uttered
Though it strike the soul of the Cæsar dumb."

Cæsar turned in his bed and muttered,
With a struggle for breath the lamp-flame guttered ;
Calpurnia heard her husband moan :
" The house is falling,
The beaten men come into their own."

" Speak your word," said the guard at the gate ;
" Yes, but bear it to Cæsar straight,
Say, ' Your murderer's knives are homing,
Your killer's gang is lying in wait.'

" Out of the wind that is blowing and moaning,
Through the city palace and the country loaning,
I cry, ' For the world's sake, Cæsar, beware,
And take this warning as my atoning.

" ' Beware of the Court, of the palace stair,
Of the downcast friend who speaks so fair,
Keep from the Senate, for Death is going
On many men's feet to meet you there.'

" I, who am dead, have ways of knowing
Of the crop of death that the quick are sowing.
I, who was Pompey, cry it aloud
From the dark of death, from the wind blowing.

" I, who was Pompey, once was proud,
Now I lie in the sand without a shroud ;
I cry to Cæsar out of my pain,
' Cæsar, beware, your death is vowed.' "

The light grey grew on the window-pane,
The windcocks swung in a burst of rain,
The window of Cæsar flung unshuttered,
The horse-hoofs died into wind again.

Cæsar turned in his bed and muttered,
With a struggle for breath the lamp-flame guttered ;
Calpurnia heard her husband moan :
" The house is falling,
The beaten men come into their own."

HAROLD MONRO

JOURNEY

I

How many times I nearly miss the train
By running up the staircase once again
For some dear trifle almost left behind.
At that last moment the unwary mind
Forgets the solemn tick of station-time ;
That muddy lane the feet must climb—
The bridge—the ticket—signal down—
Train just emerging beyond the town :
The great blue engine panting as it takes
The final curve, and grinding on its brakes
Up to the platform-edge. . . . The little doors
Swing open, while the burly porter roars.
The tight compartment fills : our careful eyes
Go to explore each other's destinies.
A lull. The station-master waves. The train
Gathers, and grips, and takes the rails again,
Moves to the shining open land, and soon
Begins to tittle-tattle a tame tattoon.

II

They ramble through the country-side,
Dear gentle monsters, and we ride
Pleasantly seated—so we sink
Into a torpor on the brink
Of thought, or read our books, and understand
Half them and half the backward-gliding land :

(Trees in a dance all twirling round ;
Large rivers flowing with no sound ;
The scattered images of town and field,
Shining flowers half concealed.)
And, having settled to an equal rate,
They swing the curve and straighten to the straight,
Curtail their stride and gather up their joints,
Snort, dwindle their steam for the noisy points,
Leap them in safety, and, the other side,
Loop again to an even stride.

The long train moves : we move in it along.
Like an old ballad, or an endless song,
It drones and wimbles its unwearied croon—
Croons, drones, and mumbles all the afternoon.

Towns with their fifty chimneys close and high,
Wreathed in great smoke between the earth and sky,
It hurtles through them, and you think it must
Halt—but it shrieks and splutters them with dust,
Cracks like a bullet through their big affairs,
Rushes the station-bridge, and disappears
Out to the suburb, laying bare
Each garden trimmed with pitiful care ;
Children are caught at idle play,
Held a moment, and thrown away.
Nearly everyone looks round.
Some dignified inhabitant is found
Right in the middle of the commonplace—
Buttoning his trousers, or washing his face.

III

Oh the wild engine! Every time I sit
In any train I must remember it.
The way it smashes through the air; its great
Petulant majesty and terrible rate:
Driving the ground before it, with those round
Feet pounding, eating, covering the ground;
The piston using up the white steam so
You cannot watch it when it come or go;
The cutting, the embankment; how it takes
The tunnels, and the clatter that it makes;
So careful of the train and of the track,
Guiding us out, or helping us go back;
Breasting its destination: at the close
Yawning, and slowly dropping to a doze.

IV

We who have looked each other in the eyes
This journey long, and trundled with the train,
Now to our separate purposes must rise,
Becoming decent strangers once again.
The little chamber we have made our home
In which we so conveniently abode,
The complicated journey we have come,
Must be an unremembered episode.
Our common purpose made us all like friends.
How suddenly it ends!
A nod, a murmur, or a little smile,
Or often nothing, and away we file.

I hate to leave you, comrades. I will stay
To watch you drift apart and pass away.
It seems impossible to go and meet
All those strange eyes of people in the street.
But, like some proud unconscious god, the train
Gathers us up and scatters us again.

SOLITUDE

When you have tidied all things for the night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep.

The large and gentle furniture has stood
In sympathetic silence all the day
With that old kindness of domestic wood;
Nevertheless the haunted room will say:
"Some one must be away."

The little dog rolls over half awake,
Stretches his paws, yawns, looking up at you,
Wags his tail very slightly for your sake,
That you may feel he is unhappy too.

A distant engine whistles, or the floor
Creaks, or the wandering night-wind bangs a door.

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near.

MILK FOR THE CAT

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh ;
The two old ladies stroke their silk :
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk :

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above ;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea ;
Her tail hangs loose ; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstasy holds her life ;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last half drop,
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in that great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

UNKNOWN COUNTRY

Here in this other world, they come and go
With easy dream-like movements to and fro.
They stare through lovely eyes, yet do not seek
An answering gaze, or that a man should speak.

Had I a load of gold, and should I come
Bribing their friendship, and to buy a home,
They would stare harder and would slightly frown :
I am a stranger from the distant town.

Oh, with what patience I have tried to win
The favour of the hostess of the Inn !
Have I not offered toast on frothing toast
Looking toward the melancholy host ;
Praised the old wall-eyed mare to please the groom ;
Laughed to the laughing maid and fetched her broom ;
Stood in the background not to interfere
When the cool ancients frolicked at their beer ;
Talked only in my turn, and made no claim
For recognition or by voice or name,
Content to listen, and to watch the blue
Or grey of eyes, or what good hands can do ?

Sun-freckled lads, who at the dusk of day
Stroll through the village with a scent of hay
Clinging about you from the windy hill,
Why do you keep your secret from me still ?
You loiter at the corner of the street ;
I in the distance silently entreat.
I know too well I'm city soiled, but then
So are to-day ten million other men.
My heart is true : I've neither will nor charms
To lure away your maidens from your arms.
Trust me a little. Must I always stand
Lonely, a stranger from an unknown land ?

There is a riddle here. Though I'm more wise
Than you, I cannot read your simple eyes.
I find the meaning of their gentle look
More difficult than any learned book.
I pass : perhaps a moment you may chaff
My walk, and so dismiss me with a laugh.
I come : you all, most grave and most polite,
Stand silent first, then wish me calm Good-Night.
When I go back to town someone will say :
" I think that stranger must have gone away."
And " Surely ! " someone else will then reply.
Meanwhile, within the dark of London, I
Shall, with my forehead resting on my hand,
Not cease remembering your distant land ;
Endeavouring to reconstruct aright
How some treed hill has looked in evening light ;
Or be imagining the blue of skies
Now as in heaven, now as in your eyes ;
Or in my mind confusing looks or words
Of yours with dawnlight, or the song of birds :
Not able to resist, not even keep
Myself from hovering near you in my sleep :
You still as callous to my thought and me
As flowers to the purpose of the bee.

THISTLEDOWN

This might have been a place for sleep,
But, as from that small hollow there
Hosts of bright thistledown begin
Their dazzling journey through the air,
An idle man can only stare.

They grip their withered edge of stalk
In brief excitement for the wind ;
They hold a breathless final talk,
And when their filmy cables part
One almost hears a little cry.

Some cling together while they wait,
And droop and gaze and hesitate,
But others leap along the sky,
Or circle round and calmly choose
The gust they know they ought to use ;

While some in loving pairs will glide,
Or watch the others as they pass,
Or rest on flowers in the grass,
Or circle through the shining day
Like silvery butterflies at play.

Some catch themselves to every mound,
Then lingeringly and slowly move
As if they knew the precious ground
Were opening for their fertile love ;
They almost try to dig, they need
So much to plant their thistle-seed.

T. STURGE MOORE

SENT FROM EGYPT WITH A FAIR ROBE OF TISSUE TO A SICILIAN VINE-DRESSER

276 B.C.

Put out to sea, if wine thou wouldest make
Such as is made in Cos : when open boat
May safely launch, advice of pilots take ;
And find the deepest bottom, most remote
From all encroachment of the crumbling shore,
Where no fresh stream tempers the rich salt wave,
Forcing rash sweetness on sage ocean's brine ;
As youthful shepherds pour
Their first love forth to Battos gnarled and grave,
Fooling shrewd age to bless some fond design.

Not after storm ! but when, for a long spell,
No white-maned horse has raced across the blue,
Put from the beach ! lest troubled be the well—
Less pure thy draught than from such depth were due.
Fast close thy largest jars, prepared and clean !
Next weigh each buoyant womb down through the flood,
Far down ! when, with a cord the lid remove,
And it will fill unseen,
Swift as a heart Love smites sucks back the blood :—
This bubbles, deeper born than sighs, shall prove.

If thy bowed shoulders ache, as thou dost haul—
Those groan who climb with rich ore from the mine ;
Labour untold round Ilion girt a wall ;
A god toiled that Achilles' arms might shine ;

Think of these things and double knit thy will!
Then, should the sun be hot on thy return,
Cover thy jars with piles of bladder weed,
Dripping, and fragrant still
From sea-wolds where it grows like bracken-fern:
A grapnel dragged will soon supply thy need.

Home to a tun convey thy precious freight!
Wherein, for thirty days, it should abide,
Closed, yet not quite closed from the air, and wait
While, through dim stillness, slowly doth subside
Thick sediment. The humour of a day,
Which has defeated youth and health and joy,
Down, through a dreamless sleep, will settle thus,
Till riseth maiden gay
Set free from all glooms past—or else a boy
Once more a school-friend worthy Troilus.

Yet to such cool wood tank some dream might dip:
Vision of Aphrodite sunk to sleep,
Or of some sailor let down from a ship,
Young, dead, and lovely, while across the deep,
Through the calm night, his hoarse-voiced comrades chaunt—
So far at sea, they cannot reach the land
To lay him perfect in the warm brown earth.
Pray that such dreams there haunt!
While, through damp darkness, where thy tun doth stand,
Cold salamanders sidle round its girth.

Gently draw off the clear and tomb it yet
For other twenty days in cedarn casks !
Where through trance, surely, prophecy will set ;
As, dedicated to light temple-tasks,
The young priest dreams the unknown mystery.
Through Ariadne, knelt disconsolate
In the sea's marge, so welled back warmth which throbbed
With nuptial promise : she
Turned ; and, half-choked through dewy glens, some great,
Some magic drone of revel coming sobbed.

Of glorious fruit, indeed, must be thy choice,
Such as has fully ripened on the branch,
Such as due rain, then sunshine, made rejoice,
Which, pulped and coloured, now deep bloom doth blanch ;
Clusters like odes for victors in the games,
Strophe on strophe globed, pure nectar all !
Spread such to dry,—if Helios grant thee grace,
Exposed unto his flames
Two days, or, if not, three ; or, should rain fall,
Stretch them on hurdles in the house four days.

Grapes are not sharded chestnuts, which the tree
Lets fall to burst them on the ground, where red
Rolls forth the fruit, from white-lined wards set free,
And all undamaged glows 'mid husks it shed ;
Nay, they are soft and should be singly stripped
From off the bunch, by maiden's dainty hand,

Then dropped through the cool silent depth to sink
(Coy, as herself hath slipped,
Bathing, from shelves in caves along the strand)
Till round each dark grape water barely wink ;
Since some nine measures of sea-water fill
A butt of fifty, ere the plump fruit peep,—
Like sombre dolphin shoals when nights are still,
Which penned in Proteus' wizard circle sleep,
And 'twixt them glinting curves of silver glance
If Zephyr, dimpling dark calm, counts them o'er.—
Let soak thy fruit for two days thus, then tread !
While bare-legged bumpkins dance,
Bright from thy bursting press arched spouts shall pour,
And gurgling torrents towards thy vats run red.

Meanwhile the maidens, each with wooden rake,
Drag back the skins and laugh at aprons splashed ;
Or youths rest, boasting how their brown arms ache,
So fast their shovels for so long have flashed,
Baffling their comrades' legs with mounting heaps.
Treble their labour ! still the happier they,
Who at this genial task wear out long hours,
Till vast night round them creeps,
When soon the torch-light dance whirls them away ;
For gods who love wine double all their powers.
Iacchus is the always grateful god !
His vineyards are more fair than gardens far ;
Hanging, like those of Babylon, they nod
O'er each Ionian cliff and hill-side scar !
While Cypris lends him saltness, depth, and peace ;
The brown earth yields him sap for richest green ;

And he has borrowed laughter from the sky ;
Wildness from winds ; and bees
Bring honey.—Then choose casks which thou hast seen
Are leakless, very wholesome, and quite dry !

That Coan wine the very finest is,
I do assure thee, who have travelled much
And learned to judge of diverse vintages.
Faint not before the toil ! this wine is such
As tempteth princes launch long pirate barks ;—
From which may Zeus protect Sicilian bays,
And, ere long, me safe home from Egypt bring,
Letting no black-sailed sharks
Scent this king's gifts, for whom I sweeten praise
With those same songs thou didst to Chloë sing !

I wrote them 'neath the vine-cloaked elm, for thee.
Recall those nights ! our couches were a load
Of scented lentisk ; upward, tree by tree,
Thy father's orchard sloped, and past us flowed
A stream sluiced for his vineyards ; when above,
The apples fell, they on to us were rolled,
But kept us not awake.—O Laco, own
How thou didst rave of love !
Now art thou staid, thy son is three years old ;
But I, who made thee love-songs, live alone.

Muse thou at dawn o'er thy yet slumbering wife ! —
Not chary of her best was nature there,
Who, though a third of her full gift of life
Was spent, still added beauties still more rare ;

What calm slow days, what holy sleep at night,
Evolved her for long twilight trystings fraught
With panic blushes and tip-toe surmise :
And then, what mystic might—
All, with a crowning boon, through travail brought !
Consider this and give thy best likewise !

Ungrateful be not ! Laco, ne'er be that !
Well worth thy while to make such wine 'twould be :
I see thy red face 'neath thy broad straw hat,
I see thy house, thy vineyards, Sicily ! —
Thou dost demur, good but too easy friend !
Come, put those doubts away ! thou hast strong lads,
Brave wenches ; on the steep beach lolls thy ship
Where vine-clad slopes descend,
Sheltering our bay, that headlong rillet glads,
Like a stripped child fain in the sea to dip.

A SPANISH PICTURE

Thy life is over now, Don Juan :
Thy fingers are so shrunk
That all their rings from off their cold tips crowd,
Where limp thy hand hath sunk ;

On a trestle-table laid, Don Juan,
A half-mask near thine ear,
A visor black in which void gape two gaps
Where through thou oft didst leer.

Thou waitest for the priests, Don Juan,
To bear thee to thy grave;
Thou'rt theirs at length beyond all doubt, but ha!
Hast now no soul to save.

Thou wast brought home last night, Don Juan,
Upon a stable door;
Beneath a young nun's casement, found dropped dead,
Where thou hadst wooed of yore:

To pay their trouble then, Don Juan,
Those base grooms took thy sword;
A rapier to fetch gold, with shagreened sheath,
Wrought hand-grip, and silk cord;

Which, with thy fame enhanced, Don Juan,
Were worth hidalgo's rent;
Yet on which now, at most, some few moidore
May by some fop be spent.

Dull brown a cloak enwraps, Don Juan,
Both thy lean shanks, one arm,
That old bird-cage thy breast, where like magpie
Thy heart hopped on alarm.

Yet out beyond thy cloak, Don Juan,
Thrust prim white-stocking'd feet—
Silk-stocking'd feet that in quadrille pranced round—
Slippers high-heeled and neat;

Thy silver-buckled shoes, Don Juan,
No more shall tread a floor,
Beside their heels upon the board lies now
A half-peeled onion's core :

Munching, a crone, that knew, Don Juan,
Thy best contrivèd plots,
Hobbles about the room, whose gaunt stone walls
Drear echo as she trots ;

She makes her bundle up, Don Juan ;
She'll not forget thy rings,
Thy buckles, nor silk stockings ; nay, not she !
They'll go with her few things.

Those lids she hath pulled down, Don Juan,
That lowered ne'er for shame ;
No spark from beauty more in thy brain pan,
Shall make its tinder flame :

Thou hast enjoyed all that, Don Juan,
Which good resolves doth daunt,
Which hypocrites doth tempt to stake vile souls,
Which cowards crave and want :

Thou wast an envied man, Don Juan,
Long shalt be envied still ;
Thou hadst thy beauty as the proud pard hath,
And instinct trained to skill.

T. Sturge Moore

A DUET

" Flowers nodding gaily, scent in air,
Flowers posied, flowers for the hair,
Sleepy flowers, flowers bold to stare— "
" Oh, pick me some ! "

" Shells with lip, or tooth, or bleeding gum,
Tell-tale shells, and shells that whisper ' Come,'
Shells that stammer, blush, and yet are dumb— "
" Oh, let me hear ! "

" Eyes so black they draw one trembling near,
Brown eyes, caverns flooded with a tear,
Cloudless eyes, blue eyes so windy clear— "
" Oh, look at me ! "

" Kisses sadly blown across the sea,
Darkling kisses, kisses fair and free,
Bob-a-cherry kisses 'neath a tree— "
" Oh, give me one ! "

Thus sang a king and queen in Babylon.

THE GAZELLES

When the sheen on tall summer grass is pale,
Across blue skies white clouds float on
In shoals, or disperse and singly sail,
Till, the sun being set, they all are gone :

Yet, as long as they may shine bright in the sun,
They flock or stray through the daylight bland,
While their stealthy shadows like foxes run
Beneath where the grass is dry and tanned :

And the waste, in hills that swell and fall,
Goes heaving into yet dreamier haze ;
And a wonder of silence is over all
Where the eye feeds long like a lover's gaze :

Then, cleaving the grass, gazelles appear
(The gentler dolphins of kindlier waves)
With sensitive heads alert of ear ;
Frail crowds that a delicate hearing saves,

That rely on the nostrils' keenest power,
And are governed from trance-like distances
By hopes and fears, and, hour by hour,
Sagacious of safety, snuff the breeze.

They keep together, the timid hearts ;
And each one's fear with a panic thrill
Is passed to an hundred ; and if one starts
In three seconds all are over the hill.

A Nimrod might watch, in his hall's wan space,
After the feast, in the moonlit floor,
The timorous mice that troop and race,
As tranced o'er those herds the sun doth pour ;

Like a wearied tyrant sated with food
Who envies each tiniest thief that steals
Its hour from his abstracted mood,
For it living zest and beauty reveals.

He alone, save the quite dispassionate moon,
Sees them; she stares at the prowling pard
Who surprises their sleep and, ah! how soon
Is riding the weakest or sleepiest hard!

Let an agony's nightmare course begin,
Four feet with five spurs a piece control,
Like a horse-thief reduced to save his skin
Or a devil that rides a human soul!

The race is as long as recorded time,
Yet brief as the flash of assassin's knife;
For 'tis crammed as history is with crime
'Twixt the throbs at taking and losing life;

Then the warm wet clutch on the nape of the neck,
Through which the keen incisors drive;
Then the fleet knees give, down drops the wreck
Of yesterday's pet that was so alive.

Yet the moon is naught concerned, ah no!
She shines as on a drifting plank
Far in some northern sea-stream's flow
From which two numbed hands loosened and sank.

Such thinning their number must suffer ; and worse
When hither at times the Shah's children roam,
Their infant listlessness to immerse
In energy's ancient upland home :

For here the shepherd in years of old
Was taught by the stars, and bred a race
That welling forth from these highlands rolled
In tides of conquest o'er earth's face :

On piebald ponies or else milk-white,
Here, with green bridles in silver bound,
A crescent moon on the violet night
Of their saddle cloths, or a sun rayed round,—

With tiny bells on their harness ringing,
And voices that laugh and are shrill by starts,
Prancing, curvetting, and with them bringing
Swift chetahs cooped up in light-wheeled carts,

They come, and their dainty pavilions pitch
In some valley, beside a sinuous pool,
Where a grove of cedars towers in which
Herons have built, where the shade is cool ;

Where they tether their ponies to low-hung boughs,
Where long through the night their red fires gleam,
Where the morning's stir doth them arouse
To their bath in the lake, as from dreams to a dream.

And thence in an hour their hunt rides forth,
And the chetahs course the shy gazelle
To the east or west or south or north,
And every eve in a distant vale

A hecatomb of the slaughtered beasts
Is piled ; tongues loll from breathless throats ;
Round large jet eyes the horsefly feasts—
Jet eyes, which now a blue film coats :

Dead there they bleed, and each prince there
Is met by his sister, wife, or bride—
Delicious ladies with long dark hair
And soft dark eyes, and brows arched wide,

In quilted jacket, embroidered sash,
And tent-like skirts of pleated lawn ;
While their silk-lined jewelled slippers flash
Round bare feet bedded like pools at dawn :

So choicefully prepared to please,
Young, female, royal of race and mood,
In indolent compassion these
O'er those dead beauteous creatures brood :

They lean some minutes against their friend,
A lad not slow to praise himself,
Who tells how this one met his end
Out-raced, or trapped by leopard stealth,

And boasts his chetahs fleetest are;
Through his advice the chance occurred,
That leeward vale by which the car
Was well brought round to head the herd.

Seeing him bronzed by sun and wind,
She feels his power and owns him lord,
Then, that his courage may please her mind,
With a soft coy hand half draws his sword,

Just shudders to see the cold steel gleam,
And drops it back in the long curved sheath;
She will make his evening meal a dream
And surround his sleep like some rich wreath

Of heavy-lidded flowers bewitched
To speak soft words of ecstasy
To wizard king old, wise, and enriched
With all save youth's and love's sweet glee.

But, while they sleep, the orphaned herd
And wounded stragglers, through the night
Wander in pain, and wail unheard
To the moon and the stars so cruelly bright:

Why are they born? ah! why beget
They in the long November gloom
Heirs of their beauty, their fleetness,—yet
Heirs of their panics, their pangs, their doom?

That to princely spouses children are born
To be daintily bred and taught to please,
Has a fitness like the return of morn:
But why perpetuate lives like these?

Why, with horns that jar and with fiery eyes,
Should the male stags fight for the shuddering does
Through the drear dark nights, with frequent cries
From tyrant lust or outlawed woes?

Doth the meaningless beauty of their lives
Rave in the spring, when they course afar
Like the shadows of birds, and the young fawn strives
Till its parents no longer the fleetest are?

Like the shadows of flames which the sun's rays throw
On a kiln's blank wall, where glaziers dwell,
Pale shadows as those from glasses they blow,
Yet that lap at the blank wall and rebel,—

Even so to my curious trance-like thought
Those herds move over those pallid hills,
With fever as of a frail life caught
In circumstance o'er-charged with ills;

More like the shadow of lives than life,
Or most like the life that is never born
From baffled purpose and foredoomed strife,
That in each man's heart must be hidden from scorn,

Yet with something of beauty very rare
Unseizable, fugitive, half discerned ;
The trace of intentions that might have been fair
In action, left on a face that yearned

But long has ceased to yearn, alas !
So faint a trace do they leave on the slopes
Of hills as sleek as their coat with grass ;
So faint may the trace be of noblest hopes.

Yet why are they born to roam and die ?
Can their beauty answer thy query, O soul ?
Nay, nor that of hopes which were born to fly,
But whose pinions the common and coarse day stole.

Like that region of grassy hills outspread,
A realm of our thoughts knows days and nights
And summers and winters, and had fed
Ineffectual herds of vanished delights.

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

SERENITY

I ASK no more for wonders : let me be
At peace within my heart, my fever stilled
By the calm circuit of the year fulfilled,
Autumn to follow summer in the tree
Of my new-ordered being. Silently
My leaves shall on the unfretting earth be spilled,
The pride be slowly scattered that shall gild
A windless triumph of serenity.

Vex me no more with dreams ; the tortured mind
Hath turned and rent the dreamer. Foreordain
My motions, and my seasons solemn lead
Each to his own perfection whence declined
Their measured sequence promise shall contain,
And my late-opened husk let fall a seed.

TRAIN JOURNEY

FOR what cause ? To what end ?
Into what nameless disaster speeding
Through a twilight cavern of space unheeding,
Through vapours of tears, with a numb heart bleeding,
Torn from what friend ?

Cause there is none, nor friend ;
Nor was that joy from which I parted,
But only what is no longer, yet departed
Its voice rings golden to me broken-hearted,
Saying, There is no end.

ROBERT NICHOLS

TO ——

Asleep within the deadest hour of night
And turning with the earth, I was aware
How suddenly the eastern curve was bright,
As when the sun arises from his lair.
But not the sun arose : it was thy hair
Shaken up heaven in tossing leagues of light.

Since then I know that neither night nor day
May I escape thee, O my heavenly hell !
Awake, in dreams, thou springest to waylay ;
And should I dare to die, I know full well
Whose voice would mock me in the mourning bell,
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

FAREWELL TO PLACE OF COMFORT

For the last time, maybe, upon the knoll
I stand. The eve is golden, languid, sad. . . .
Day like a tragic actor plays his rôle
To the last whispered word, and falls gold-clad.
I, too, take leave of all I ever had.

They shall not say I went with heavy heart :
Heavy I am, but soon I shall be free ;
I love them all, but O I now depart
A little sadly, strangely, fearfully,
As one who goes to try a Mystery.

The bell is sounding down in Dedham Vale :
Be still, O bell ! too often standing here
When all the air was tremulous, fine, and pale,
Thy golden note so calm, so still, so clear,
Out of my stony heart has struck a tear.

And now tears are not mine. I have release
From all the former and the later pain ;
Like the mid-sea I rock in boundless peace,
Soothed by the charity of the deep sea rain. . . .
Calm rain ! Calm sea ! Calm found, long sought in vain.
O bronzen pines, evening of gold and blue,
Steep mellow slope, brimmed twilit pools below,
Hushed trees, still vale dissolving in the dew,
Farewell ! Farewell ! There is no more to do.
We have been happy. Happy now I go.

THE FULL HEART

Alone on the shore in the pause of the night-time
I stand and I hear the long wind blow light ;
I view the constellations quietly, quietly burning ;
I hear the wave fall in the hush of the night.

Long after I am dead, ended this bitter journey,
Many another whose heart holds no light
Shall your solemn sweetness, hush, awe, and comfort,
O my companions, Wind, Waters, Stars, and Night.

Near Gold Cap, 1916.

Robert Nichols

THE TOWER

It was deep night, and over Jerusalem's low roofs
The moon floated, drifting through high vaporous woofs.
The moonlight crept and glistened silent, solemn, sweet,
Over dome and column, up empty, endless street;
In the closed, scented gardens the rose loosed from the stem
Her white showery petals; none regarded them;
The starry thicket breathed odours to the sentinel palm;
Silence possessed the city like a soul possessed by calm.

Not a spark in the warren under the giant night,
Save where in a turret's lantern beamed a grave, still light:
There in the topmost chamber a gold-eyed lamp was lit—
Marvellous lamp in darkness, informing, redeeming it!
For, set in that tiny chamber, Jesus, the blessed and doomed,
Spoke to the lone apostles as light to men entombed;
And spreading His hands in blessing, as one soon to be dead,
He put soft enchantment into spare wine and bread.

The hearts of the disciples were broken and full of tears,
Because their Lord, the spearless, was hedged about with spears;
And in His face the sickness of departure had spread a gloom
At leaving His young friends friendless.
They could not forget the tomb.

He smiled subduedly, telling, in tones soft as voice of the dove,
The endlessness of sorrow, the eternal solace of love ;
And lifting the earthly tokens, wine and sorrowful bread,
He bade them sup and remember One who lived and was dead.
And they could not restrain their weeping.
But one rose up to depart,
Having weakness and hate of weakness raging within his heart,
And bowed to the robed assembly whose eyes gleamed wet in the light.
Judas arose and departed ; night went out to the night.

Then Jesus lifted His voice like a fountain in an ocean of tears,
And comforted His disciples and calmed and allayed their fears.
But Judas wound down the turret, creeping from floor to floor,
And would fly ; but one leaning, weeping, barred him beside the door.
And he knew her by her ruddy garment and two yet-watching men :
Mary of Seven Evils, Mary Magdalen.
And he was frighted at her. She sighed : "I dreamed Him dead.
We sell the body for silver. . . ."
Then Judas cried out and fled
Forth into the night ! . . . The moon had begun to set ;
A drear, deft wind went sifting, setting the dust afret.

Into the heart of the city Judas ran on and prayed
To stern Jehovah lest his deed make him afraid.
But in the tiny lantern, hanging as if on air,
The disciples sat unspeaking. Amaze and peace were there.
For *His* voice, more lovely than song of all earthly birds,
In accents humble and happy spoke slow, consoling words.

Thus Jesus discoursed, and was silent, sitting upright, and soon
Past the casement behind Him slanted the sinking moon;
And, rising for Olivet, all stared, between love and dread,
Seeing the torrid moon a ruddy halo behind His head.

FULFILMENT

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once? grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren: one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed, and stony!
O sudden spasm, release of the dead!
Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once? grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine!

THE SPRIG OF LIME

He lay, and those who watched him were amazed
To see unheralded beneath the lids
Twin tears, new gathered at the price of pain,
Start and at once run crookedly athwart
Cheeks channelled long by pain, never by tears.
So desolate too the sigh next uttered
They had wept also, but his great lips moved,
And bending down one heard, "*A sprig of lime;*
Bring me a sprig of lime." Whereat she stole
With dumb signs forth to pluck the thing he craved.

So lay he till a lime-twig had been snapped
From some still branch that swept the outer grass
Far from the silver pillar of the bole
Which mounting past the house's crusted roof
Split into massy limbs, crossed boughs, a maze
Of close-compacted intercontorted staffs

Bowered in foliage wherethrough the sun
Shot sudden showers of light or crystal spars
Or wavered in a green and vitreous flood.
And all the while in faint and fainter tones
Scarce audible on deepened evening's hush
He framed his curious and last request,
For "*lime, a sprig of lime.*" Her trembling hand
Closed his loose fingers on the awkward stem
Covered above with gentle heart-shaped leaves
And under dangling, pale as honey-wax,
Square clusters of sweet-scented starry flowers.

She laid his bent arm back upon his breast,
Then watched above white knuckles clenched in prayer.
He never moved. Only at last his eyes
Opened, then brightened in such avid gaze
She feared the coma mastered him again. . . .
But no: strange sobs rose chuckling in his throat,
A stranger ecstasy suffused the flesh
Of that just mask so sun-dried, gouged and old
Which few—too few—had loved, too many feared.
"Father," she cried; "Father!"
He did not hear.

She knelt and kneeling drank the scent of limes,
Blown round the slow blind by a vesperal gust,
Till the room swam. So the lime incense blew
Into her life as once it had in his,
Though how and when and with what ageless charge
Of sorrow and deep joy how could she know?

Sweet lime that often at the height of noon
Diffusing dizzy fragrance from your boughs,
Tasselled with blossoms more innumerable
Than the black bees, the uproar of whose toil
Filled your green vaults, winning such metheglyn
As clouds their sappy cells, distil, as once
Ye used, your sunniest emanations
Toward the window where a woman kneels—
She who within that room in childish hours
Lay through the lasting murmur of blanch'd noon
Behind the sultry blind, now full now flat,
Drinking anew of every odorous breath,
Supremely happy in her ignorance
Of Time that hastens hourly and of Death
Who need not haste. Scatter your fumes, O lime,
Loose from each hispid star of citron bloom,
Tangled beneath the labyrinthine boughs,
Cloud on such stinging cloud of exhalations
As reek of youth, fierce life and summer's prime,
Though hardly now shall he in that dusk room
Savour your sweetness, since the very sprig,
Profuse of blossoms and of essences,
He smells not, who in a faltering hand
Clasps it laid close his peaked and gleaming face
Propped in the pillows. Breathe silent, lofty lime,
Your curfew secrets out in fervid scent
To the attendant shadows! Tinge the air
Of the midsummer night that now begins,
At an owl's oaring flight from dusk to dusk
And downward caper of the giddy bat
Hawking against the lustre of bare skies,

With something of th' unfathomable bliss
He, who lies dying there, knew once of old
In the serene trance of a summer night
When with th' abundance of his young bride's hair
Loosed on his breast he lay and dared not sleep,
Listening for the scarce motion of your boughs,
Which sighed with bliss as she with blissful sleep,
And drinking desperately each honied wave
Of perfume wafted past the ghostly blind
Knew first th' implacable and bitter sense
Of Time that hastes and Death who need not haste.
Shed your last sweetness, limes!
But now no more.
She, fruit of that night's love, she heeds you not,
Who bent, compassionate, to the dim floor
Takes up the sprig of lime and presses it
In pain against the stumbling of her heart,
Knowing, untold, he cannot need it now.

NIGHT RHAPSODY

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
When over all there reigns the ultimate spell
Of complete silence, darkness absolute,
To feel the world, tilted on axle-tree,
In slow gyration, with no sensible sound,
Unless to ears of unimagined beings,
Resident incorporeal or stretched
In vigilance of ecstasy among
Ethereal paths and the celestial maze.

The rumour of our onward course now brings
A steady rustle, as of some strange ship
Darkling with soundless sail all set and amply filled
By volume of an ever-constant air,
At fullest night, through seas for ever calm,
Swept lovely and unknown for ever on.

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
Embalmed in darkness watchful, sweet and still,
As is the brain's mood flattered by the swim
Of currents circumvolent in the void,
To lie quite still and to become aware
Of the dim light cast by nocturnal skies
On a dim earth beyond the window-ledge,
So, isolate from the friendly company
Of the huge universe which turns without,
To brood apart in calm and joy awhile
Until the spirit sinks and scarcely knows
Whether self is, or if self only is,
For ever. . . .

How beautiful to wake at night,
Within the room grown strange, and still, and sweet,
And live a century while in the dark
The dripping wheel of silence slowly turns,
To watch the window open on the night,
A dewy silent deep where nothing stirs,
And, lying thus, to feel dilate within
The press, the conflict, and the heavy pulse
Of incommunicable sad ecstasy,
Growing until the body seems outstretched

In perfect crucifixion on the arms
Of a cross pointing from last void to void,
While the heart dies to a mere midway spark.
All happiness thou holdest, happy night,
For such as lie awake and feel dissolved
The peaceful spice of darkness and the cool
Breath hither blown from the ethereal flowers
That mist thy fields ! O happy, happy wounds,
Conditioned by existence in humanity,
That have such powers to heal them ! Slow sweet sighs
Torn from the bosom, silent wails, the birth
Of such long-treasured tears as pain the eyes,
Who, waking, hears the divine solicitudes
Of midnight with ineffable purport charged.

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
Another night, in darkness yet more still,
Save when the myriad leaves on full-fledged boughs,
Filled rather by the perfume's wandering flood
Than by dispansion of the still sweet air,
Shall from the furthest utter silences
In glimmering secrecy have gathered up
An host of whisperings and scattered sighs,
To loose at last a sound as of the plunge
And lapsing seethe of some Pacific wave,
Which, risen from the star-thronged outer troughs,
Rolls in to wreathe with circling foam away
The flutter of the golden moths that haunt
The star's one glimmer daggered on wet sands.

So beautiful it is to wake at night!
Imagination, loudening with the surf
Of the midsummer wind among the boughs,
Gathers my spirit from the haunts remote
Of faintest silence and the shades of sleep,
To bear me on the summit of her wave
Beyond known shores, beyond the mortal edge
Of thought terrestrial, to hold me poised
Above the frontiers of infinity,
To which in the full reflux of the wave
Come soon I must, bubble of solving foam,
Borne to those other shores—now never mine
Save for a hovering instant, short as this
Which now sustains me ere I be drawn back—
To learn again, and wholly learn, I trust,
How beautiful it is to wake at night.

ALFRED NOYES

THE SHADOW

A SHADOW leaned over me, whispering, in the darkness,
Thoughts without sound—
Sorrowful thoughts that filled me with helpless wonder
And held me bound.

Sadder than memory, sharp as remorse, in the quiet
Before I slept,
The whisper I heard of the one implacable Shadow,
And my heart wept.

"Day by day, in your eyes, the light grows dimmer,
With the joy you have sung.
You knew it would go; but, ah, when you knew it and
sang it
Your heart was young;

"And a year to you, then, was an age; but now," said the
Shadow,
Malignant and cold,
"The light and the colour are fading, the ecstasy dying,
It is time to grow old."

Oh, I could have borne the worst that he had to tell me,
Lost youth, age, death;
But he turned to breathe on the quiet heart sleeping beside
me
The same cold breath.

And there by the throat I grappled him. "Let me bear
all of it.
Let her dream on,"
Soundlessly, shadow with shadow, we wrestled together,
Till the grey dawn.

THE LAST OF THE BOOKS

Is it too strange to think
That, when all life at last from earth is gone,
And round the sun's pale blink
Our desolate planet wheels its ice and stone,
Housed among storm-proof walls there yet may abide,
Defying long the venoms of decay,
A still dark throng of books, dumb books of song
And tenderest fancies born of youth and May?

A quiet remembering host,
Out-living the poor dust that gave them birth,
Unvisited by even a wandering ghost,
But treasuring still the music of our earth,
In little fading hieroglyphs they shall bear
Through death and night, the legend of our Spring,
And how the lilac scented the bright air
When hearts throbbed warm, and lips could kiss and sing.

And, ere that record fail,
Strange voyagers from a mightier planet come
On wingèd ships that through the void can sail
And gently alight upon our ancient home;

Strange voices echo, and strange flares explore,
  Strange hands, with curious weapons, burst these bars,
Lift the brown volumes to the light once more,
  And bear their stranger secrets through the stars.

SEAGULLS ON THE SERPENTINE

Memory, out of the mist, in a long slow ripple
  Breaks, blindly, against the shore.
The mist has buried the town in its own oblivion.
  This, this is the sea once more.

Mist—mist—brown mist; but a sense in the air of snow-
    flakes!
  I stand where the ripples die,
Lift up an arm and wait, till my lost ones know me,
  Wheel overhead, and cry.

Salt in the eyes, and the seagulls, mewing and swooping,
  Snatching the bread from my hand;
Brushing my hand with their breasts, in swift caresses
  To show that they understand.

Oh, why are you so afraid? We are all of us exiles!
  Wheel back in your clamorous rings!
We have all of us lost the sea, and we all remember.
  But you—have wings.

ON REMBRANDT'S PORTRAIT OF A RABBI

He has thought and suffered, but without a cry.
The wanhope of this wise old face appears
To watch, with eyes that hide their own deep tears,
The generations hurrying down to die;
For he can see, beyond our midnight sky
New griefs arising with the unborn years;
And, brooding on the riddle of things, he bears
His load of thought, in dreadful innocency.
Children have nestled to him; but all are flown.
He awaits their homing wings, as old men do,
Across this world's bewildering surge and roar.
An envoy of the Eternal and Unknown;
An alien to all pride; he faces you,
In simplest brotherhood, and desires no more.

A FOREST SONG

Who would be a king
That can sit in the sun and sing?
Nay. I have a kingdom of my own.
A fallen oak-tree is my throne.
Then pluck the strings and tell me true
If Cæsar in his glory knew
The worlds he lost in sun and dew.

Who would be a queen
That sees what my love hath seen ?—
The blood of myriads vainly shed
To make one royal ruby red !
Then, tell me, music, why the great
For quarrelling trumpets abdicate
This quick, this absolute estate.

Nay. Who would sing in heaven
Among the choral Seven,
That hears, as Love and I have heard,
The whole sky listening to one bird ?
And where's the ruby, tell me where,
Whose crimsons for one breath compare
With this wild rose which all may share ?

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE

It is a whisper among the hazel bushes ;
  It is a long low whispering voice that fills
With a sad music the bending and swaying rushes ;
  It is a heart-beat deep in the quiet hills.

Twilight people, why will you still be crying,
  Crying and calling to me out of the trees ?
For under the quiet grass the wise are lying,
  And all the strong ones are gone over the seas.

And I am old, and in my heart at your calling
  Only the old dead dreams a-fluttering go ;
As the wind, the forest wind, in its falling
  Sets the withered leaves fluttering to and fro.

WILFRED OWEN

Born 1893

Killed in Action 1918

STRANGE MEETING

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall.
With thousand fears that vision's face was grained ;
Yet no blood reached them from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
" Strange, friend," I said, " here is no cause to mourn."
" None," said the other, " save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also ; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.

Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this death: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . ."

FUTILITY

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides
Full-nerved, still warm,—too hard to stir?

Was it for this the clay grew tall?
O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

SPRING OFFENSIVE

HALTED against the shade of a last hill,
They fed, and, lying easy, were at ease
And, finding comfortable chests and knees,
Carelessly slept. But many there stood still
To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,
Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

Marvelling they stood, and watched the long grass swirled
By the May breeze, murmurous with wasp and midge,
For though the summer oozed into their veins
Like the injected drug for their bone's pains,
Sharp on their souls hung the imminent line of grass,
Fearfully flashed the sky's mysterious glass.

Hour after hour they ponder in the warm field—
And the valley far behind, where the buttercups
Had blessed with gold their slow boots coming up,
Where even the little brambles would not yield,
But clutched and clung to them like sorrowing hands;
They breathe like trees unstirred.

Till like a cold gust thrilled the little word
At which each body and its soul begird

And tighten them for battle. No alarms
Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous haſte—
Only a lift and flare of eyes that faced
The sun, like a friend with whom their love is done.
O larger shone that smile againſt the sun,—
Mightier than his whose bounty these have spurned.

So, soon they topped the hill, and raced together
Over an open ſtretch of herb and heather
Exposed. And inſtantly the whole sky burned
With fury againſt them ; and soft sudden cups
Opened in thousands for their blood ; and the green
slopes
Chasmed and ſteepened sheer to infinite space.

Of them who running on that laſt high place
Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up
On the hot blaſt and fury of hell's upsurge,
Or plunged and fell away paſt this world's verge,
Some say God caught them even before they fell.

But what say such as from exiſtence' brink
Ventured but drave too swift to sink,
The few who rushed in the body to enter hell,
And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames
With superhuman inhumanities,
Long-famous glories, immemorial shames—
And crawling slowly back, have by degrees
Regained cool peaceful air in wonder—
Why speak they not of comrades that went under ?

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

WHAT passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayer nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs—
The shrill, demented choirs—of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmer of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

THE SEND-OFF

DOWN the close, darkening lanes they sang their way
To the siding shed,
And lined the train with faces grimly gay.

Their breasts were stuck all white with wreath and spray
As men's are, dead.

Dull porters watched them, and a casual tramp
Stood staring hard,

Sorry to miss them from the upland camp.
Then, unmoved, signals nodded, and a lamp
Winked to the guard.

So secretly, like wrongs hushed up, they went.
They were not ours :
We never heard to which front these were sent.

Nor there if they yet mock what women meant
Who gave them flowers.

Shall they return to beatings of great bells
In wild trainloads ?
A few, a few, too few for drums and yells,
May creep back, silent, to still vintage wells
Up half-known roads.

GREATER LOVE

Red lips are not so red
  As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
  When I behold eyes blinded in my stead !

Your slender attitude
  Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care ;
Till the fierce love they bear
  Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

Your voice sings not so soft,—
  Though even as wind murmuring through raftered loft,—
Your dear voice is not dear,
Gentle, and evening clear,
As theirs whom none now hear
  Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,
  Nor large, nor dull like hearts made great with shot;
And though your hands be pale,
Paler are all which trail
Your cross through flame and hail:
  Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.

J. D. C. PELLOW

AFTER LONDON

London Bridge is broken down ;
Green is the grass of Ludgate Hill ;
I know a farmer in Camden Town
Killed a brock by Pentonville.

I have heard my grandam tell
How some thousand years ago
Houses stretched from Camberwell
Right to Highbury and Bow.

Down by Shadwell's golden meads
Tall ships' masts would stand as thick
As the pretty tufted reeds
That the Wapping children pick.

All the kings from end to end
Of all the world paid tribute then,
And meekly on the knees would bend
To the King of Englishmen.

Thinks I, while I dig my plot,
What if your grandam's tales be true ?
Thinks I, be they true or not,
What's the odds to a fool like you ?

Thinks I, while I smoke my pipe
Here beside the tumbling Fleet,
Apples drop when they are ripe,
And when they drop they are most sweet.

ECLOGA VIRGILIANA

DENIS :

THERE is a hush in the air, in the paling skies,
Stirred only by a lapwing's desolate call,
And, " see the smoke from far-off chimneys rise
And from the high hills larger shadows fall."

MICHAEL :

Oh, could you find no fair words of your own ?
Into the evening's beauty must you drag,
To break, like that sad bird, its tranquil tone,
Some melancholy, sweet, Virgilian tag ?

DENIS :

Ay, sweet and true, and therefore readily came
Those words to greet and crown this loveliness.

MICHAEL :

But hard upon the utterance of that name
Thoughts, heavy and disturbing, crowd and press
Into my foolish, easily-saddened mind,
And break the rare and brief serenity,
So hard in these tempestuous days to find
And harder still to win—To think that he,
In a like time, as troubled, and as ripe
To fall and rot, dreaming an age of gold
Revolved again, of true Saturnian type,
Half seriously and all unwittingly, told

In a courtly song the blessed babe that smiled
With its first awful breath of earthly air,
And never thought or dreamed that heavenly child
More than an idle dream, impossibly fair.

DENIS :

Strange irony, to think of Virgil turned
A prophet, almost canonised a saint,
For that rococo pastoral we have learned
To find so full of cold court-flattery's taint.

MICHAEL :

Perhaps the Church, more wise than we, discerned
Behind those borrowed ornaments, so crude
And childish, as we think now, burning dim
A gentle spirit akin to theirs, who viewed
With sad and longing eyes the clouded rim
Of his distracted world, and eased his heart,
That saw no hope or peace there, in a song
Coloured and formed with fond, half-playful art.
In such a world as Virgil's, such a time,
But darker still, and riper to decay,
And more than ripe, I fashion into rhyme
The longing of my god-forsaken day.
But here's the bitter thought, that when I read
The frozen heaven for signs, the blasted earth,
All round I see the bitter insistent need,
But promise nowhere of so bright a birth
As Virgil sang.

DENIS :

Yet never saw, for we
Must hope, though we may never hope to see.
But come, put off awhile your sadness, here
Is our inn-window, glowing with homely cheer.

JOSEPH PLUNKETT

Born 1887

Executed after Easter Week Rising 1916

I SEE HIS BLOOD UPON THE ROSE

I SEE His blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of His eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice—and carven by His power
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

FRANK PREWETT

Met ye my love?
Ye might in France have met him;
He has a wooing smile,
Who sees cannot forget him!
Met ye my love?
—We shared full many a mile.

Saw ye my love?
In lands far-off he has been,
With his yellow-tinted hair,—
In Egypt such ye have seen,
Ye knew my love?
—I was his brother there.

Heard ye my love?
My love ye must have heard,
For his voice when he will
Tinkles like cry of a bird;
Heard ye my love?—
—We sang on a Grecian hill.

Behold your love,
And how shall I forget him,
His smile, his hair, his song;
Alas, no maid shall get him
For all her love,
Where he sleeps a million strong.

Their leaves are stripped away
By savage winds at play,
And the groaning trees ask not the cause;
The merry trilling bird
That I rejoicing heard
In the snow lies dead with upthrust claws.

The kindly skies of blue
Are overclouded too,
And the clouds, no more than skies, are glad;
The huddling, frightened sheep
In sheltered corners creep,
For they fear the night-time wet and sad.

In secret, women cry,
Though soft abed they lie,
For they who buy love find it sour;
While madness roams the streets
And howls at all he meets,
Since the loved and mad have each his hour.

Sure if a God there be,
He rides too high to see
In His vaunted world the pouring tears,
Or, floating there aloft,
Is settled much too soft
In His cloud to heed the shrieks and jeers.

The blind fates take their way,
We resist our little day,

And are ground in mud beneath the mire ;
The fates are ignorant
As we, and what is meant
Shall not know till cleansing come with fire.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

AT A NIGHT CLUB

THE young men shouted with the band
And pranced their partners across the floor,
Yet when they had done, I saw them ſtand
A moment—dubious in Elsinore.

OVERHEARD

SOMEWHERE paſt Sirius, shade called to shade :
" Well, any gossip ? Something new, I truſt ? "
" Not much. They say that solar god has made
Some quite amusing things out of his duſt."

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEWSPAPER

DAYLONG he seems to read, but as he peers
At fading print, the sheet becomes a glass,
Wherein are mirrored ghoſts that smile and pass,
And lovely faces, duſt these forty years.

" Æ "

A SHEPHERD, having left the hills to roam,
Sees from afar the cities of great kings,
And so returns enraptured to his home :—
A man apart—who ſtammers golden things.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

TUSCANY

Cisterns and ſtones ; the fig-tree in the wall
Caſts down her ſhadow, ashen as her boughs
Across the road, across the thick white duſt.
Down from the hill the ſlow white oxen crawl,
Dragging the purple waggon heaped with muſt,
With ſcarlet taſſels on their milky brows,
Gentle as evening moths. Beneath the yoke
Lounging againſt the ſhaft they fitful ſtrain
To draw the waggon on its creaking ſpoke,
And all the vineyard folk
With ſtaves and ſhouldered tools ſurround the wain.
The wooden ſhovels take the purple ſtain,
The duſk is heavy with the wine's warm load ;
Here the long ſenſe of claſſic meaſure cures
The ſpirit weary of its difficult pain ;
Here the old Bacchic piety endures,
Here the ſweet legends of the world remain.
Homeric waggons lumbering the road ;
Virgilian litanies among the bine ;
Paſtoral ſloth of flocks beneath the pine ;
The ſwineherd watching, propped upon his goad,
Under the cheſtnut-trees the rootling ſwine,—
Who could ſo ſtand, and ſee this evening fall,
This calm of huſbandry, this redolent tilth,
This terracing of hills, this vintage wealth,
Without the pagan ſanity of blood
Mounting his veins in young and tempered health ?

Who could so stand, and watch processional
The vintners, herds, and flocks in dusty train
Wend through the golden evening to regain
The terraced farm and trodden threshing-floor
Where late the flail
Tossed high the maize in scud of gritty ore,
And lies half-buried in the heap of grain,—
Who could so watch, and not forget the rack
Of wills worn thin and thought become too frail,
Nor roll the centuries back
And feel the sinews of his soul grow hale,
And know himself for Rome's inheritor?

BEE-MASTER

I HAVE known honey from the Syrian hills
Stored in cool jars; the wild acacia there
On the rough terrace where the locust shrills
Tosses her spindrift on the ringing air.
Narcissus bares his nectarous perianth
In white and golden tabard to the sun,
And while the workers rob the amaranth
Or scarlet windflower low among the stone,
Practical and intent upon their crops,
The Syrian queens mate in the high hot day
Rapt visionaries of creative fray;
Soar from their fecund ecstasy alone,
And, through the blazing ether, drops
Like a small thunderbolt the vindicated drone.
But this is the bee-master's reckoning
In England. Walk among the hives and hear.

Forget not bees in winter, though they sleep.
For winter's big with summer in her womb,
And when you plant your rose-trees, plant them deep,
Having regard to bushes all aflame,
And see the dusky promise of their bloom
In small red shoots, and let each redolent name—
Tuscany, Crested Cabbage, Cottage Maid—
Load with full June November's dank repose,
See the kind cattle drowsing in the shade,
And hear the bee about his amorous trade
Brown in the gipsy crimson of the rose.

In February, if the days be clear,
The waking bee, still drowsy on the wing,
Will sense the opening of another year
And blunder out to seek another spring.
Crashing through winter sunlight's pallid gold
His clumsiness sets catkins on the willow
Ashake like lambs' tails in the early fold,
Dusting with pollen all his brown and yellow,
But when the rimy afternoon turns cold
And undern squalls buffet the chilly fellow,
He'll seek the hive's warm waxen welcoming
And set about the chambers' classic mould.

And then, pell-mell, his harvest follows swift,
Blossom and borage, lime and balm and clover,
On Downs the thyme, on cliffs the scantling thrift.
Everywhere bees go racing with the hours,
For every bee becomes a drunken lover,
Standing upon his head to sup the flowers,
All over England, from Northumbrian coasts,

To the wild sea-pink blown on Devon rocks.
Over the merry southern gardens, over
The grey-green bean-fields, round the Sussex oaſts,
Through the frilled spires of cottage hollyhocks,
Go the big brown fat bees, and blunder in
Where dusky spears of sunlight cleave the barn,
And seek the sun again, and ſtorm the whin,
And in the warm meridian solitude
Hum in the heather round the moorland tarn.
Look, too, when summer hatches out the brood,
In tardy May or early June,
And the young queens are ſtrong on the cocoon,
Watch, if the days be warm,
The flitting of the migratory swarm.
Follow, for if beyond your sight they ſtray
Your bees are loſt, and you muſt take your way
Homeward disconsolate, but if you be at hand
Then you may take your bees on ſtrangers' land.
Have your skep ready, drowse them with your smoke,
Whether they cluſter on the handy bough
Or the difficult hedge, be nimble now
For bees are captious folk
And quick to turn againſt the lubber's touch,
But if you shake them to their wicker hutch
Firmly, and turn towards the hive your skep,
Into the hive the cluſtered thousands ſtream,
Mounting the little slatted sloping ſtep,
A ready colony, queen, workers, drones,
Patient to build again the waxen thrones
For younger queens, and all the chambered cells
For lesser brood, and all the immemorial schemes.

And still they labour, though the hand of man
Inscrutable and ravaging descend,
Pillaging in their citadels,
Defeating wantonly their provident plan,
Making havoc of their patient hoard;
Still start afresh, not knowing to what end,
Not knowing to what ultimate reward,
Or what new ruin of their garnered hive
The senseless god in man will send.
Still their blind stupid industry will strive,
Constructing for destruction pitiably,
That still their unintelligible lord
May reap his wealth from their calamity.

MAKING CIDER

I saw within the wheelwright's shed
The big round cartwheels, blue and red;
A plough with blunted share;
A blue tin jug; a broken chair;
And paint in trial patchwork square
Slapped up against the wall;
The lumber of the wheelwrights' trade,
And tools on benches neatly laid,
The brace, the adze, the awl;

And, framed within the latticed panes,
Above the cluttered sill,
Saw rooks upon the stubble hill
Seeking forgotten grains;

And all the air was sweet and shrill
With juice of apples heaped in skips,
Fermenting, rotten, soft with bruise,
And all the yard was strewn with pips,
Discarded pulp, and wrung-out ooze,
That ducks with rummaging flat bill
Searched through beside the cider press
To gobble in their greediness.

The young men strained upon the crank
To wring the last reluctant inch.
They laughed together, fair and frank,
And threw their loins across the winch.
A holiday from field and dung,
From plough and harrow, scythe and spade,
To dabble in another trade,
To crush the pippins in the slats,
And see that in the little vats
An extra pint was wrung;

While round about the worthies stood,
Profuse in comment, praise or blame,
Content the press should be of wood,
Advising rum, decrying wheat,
And black strong sugar makes it sweet,
But still resolved, with maundering tongue,
That cider could not be the same
As once when they were young;
But still the young contemptuous men
Laughed kindly at their old conceit,
And strained upon the crank again.

Now barrels ranged in portly line
Mature through winter's sleep,
Aping the leisured sloth of wine
That dreams by Tiber or by Rhine,
Mellowing slow and deep ;
But keen and cold the northern nights
Sharpen the quiet yard,
And sharp like no rich southern wine
The tang of cider bites ;
For here the splintered stars and hard
Hold England in a frosty guard,
Orion and the Pleiades,
Above the wheelwright's shed,
And Sirius resting on the trees
While all the village snores abed.

EVENING

When little lights in little ports come out,
Quivering down through water with the stars,
And all the fishing-fleet of slender spars
Range at their moorings, veer with tides about ;

When race of wind is stilled and sails are furled,
And underneath our single riding-light
The curve of black-ribbed deck gleams palely white
And slumbrous waters pool a slumbrous world—

Then, and then only, have I thought how sweet
Old age might sink upon a windy youth,
Quiet beneath the riding-light of truth,
Weathered through storms, and gracious in retreat.

SAILING SHIPS

Lying on Downs above the wrinkling bay
I with the kestrels shared the cleanly day,
The candid day ; wind-shaven, brindled turf ;
Tall cliffs ; and long sea-line of marbled surf
From Cornish Lizard to the Kentish Nore
Lipping the bulwarks of the English shore,
While many a lovely ship below sailed by
On unknown errand, kempt and leisurely ;
And after each, oh, after each, my heart
Fled forth, as, watching from the Downs apart,
I shared with ships good joys and fortunes wide
That might befall their beauty and their pride ;

Shared first with them the blessèd void repose
Of oily days at sea, when only rose
The porpoise's slow wheel to break the sheen
Of satin water indolently green,
When for'ard the crew, caps tilted over eyes,
Lay heaped on deck ; slept ; murmured ; smoked ;
threw dice ;
The sleepy summer days ; the summer nights
(The coast pricked out with rings of harbour-lights) ;
The motionless nights, the vaulted nights of June
When high in the cordage drifts the entangled moon,
And blocks go knocking, and the sheets go slapping,
And lazy swells against the sides come lapping ;
And summer mornings off red Devon rocks,
Faint inland bells at dawn and crowing cocks.

Shared swifter days, when headlands into ken
Trod grandly ; threatened ; and were lost again,
Old fangs along the battlemented coast ;
And followed still my ship, when winds were most
Night-purified, and, lying steeply over,
She fled the wind as flees a girl her lover,
Quickened by that pursuit for which she fretted,
Her temper by the contest proved and whetted ;
Wild stars swept overhead ; her lofty spars
Reared to a ragged heaven sown with stars
As leaping out from narrow English ease
She faced the roll of long Atlantic seas ;

Her captain then was I, I was her crew,
The mind that laid her course, the wake she drew,
The waves that rose against her bows, the gales,—
Nay ; I was more : I was her very sails
Rounded before the wind, her eager keel,
Her straining mast-heads, her responsive wheel,
Her pennon stiffened like a swallow's wing ;
Yes, I was all her slope and speed and swing,
Whether by yellow lemons and blue sea
She dawdled through the isles off Thessaly,
Or saw the palms like sheaves of scimitars
On desert's verge below the sunset bars,
Or passed the girdle of the planet where
The Southern Cross looks over to the Bear,
And strayed, cool Northerner beneath strange skies,
Flouting the lure of tropic estuaries,
Down that long coast, and saw Magellan's Clouds arise.

And some that beat up Channel homeward-bound
I watched, and wondered what they might have found,
What alien ports enriched their teeming hold
With crates of fruit or bars of unwrought gold ?
And thought how London clerks with paper-clips
Had filed the bills of lading of those ships,
Clerks that had never seen the embattled sea,
But wrote down jettison and barratry,
Perils, Adventures, and the Act of God,
Having no vision of such wrath flung broad ;
Wrote down with weary and accustomed pen
The classic dangers of sea-faring men ;
And wrote " Restraint of Princes," and " the acts
Of the King's Enemies," as vacant facts,
Blind to the ambushed seas, the encircling roar
Of angry nations foaming into war.

TRIO

So well she knew them both ! yet as she came
Into the room, and heard their speech
Of tragic meshes knotted with her name,
And saw them, foes, but meeting each with each
Closer than friends, souls bared through enmity,
Beneath their startled gaze she thought that she
Broke as the stranger on their conference,
And left them as she stole abashed from thence.

FULL MOON

She was wearing the coral taffeta trousers
Someone had brought her from Ispahan,

And the little gold coat with pomegranate blossoms,
And the coral-hafted feather fan ;
But she ran down a Kentish lane in the moonlight,
And skipped in the pool of the moon as she ran.

She cared not a rap for all the big planets,
For Betelgeuse or Aldebaran,
And all the big planets cared nothing for her,
That small impertinent charlatan ;
But she climbed on a Kentish stile in the moonlight,
And laughed at the sky through the sticks of her fan.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

'IN THE PINK'

So Davies wrote: "This leaves me in the pink."
Then scrawled his name: "Your loving sweetheart,
Willie,"
With crosses for a hug. He'd had a drink
Of rum and tea; and, though the barn was chilly,
For once his blood ran warm; he had pay to spend.
Winter was passing; soon the year would mend.

He couldn't sleep that night. Stiff in the dark
He groaned and thought of Sundays at the farm,
When he'd go out as cheerful as a lark
In his best suit to wander arm-in-arm
With brown-eyed Gwen, and whisper in her ear
The simple silly things she liked to hear.

And then he thought: to-morrow night we trudge
Up to the trenches, and my boots are rotten.
Five miles of stodgy clay and freezing sludge,
And everything but wretchedness forgotten.
To-night he's in the pink; but soon he'll die.
And still the war goes on; *he* don't know why.

THE DEATH-BED

He drowsed and was aware of silence heaped
Round him, unshaken as the steadfast walls;

Aqueous-like floating rays of amber light,
Soaring and quivering in the wings of sleep,—
Silence and safety ; and his mortal shore
Lipped by the inward, moonless waves of death.

Someone was holding water to his mouth,
He swallowed, unresisting ; moaned and dropped
Through crimson gloom to darkness ; and forgot
The opiate throb and ache that was his wound.
Water—calm, sliding green above the weir ;
Water—a sky-lit alley for his boat,
Bird-voiced, and bordered with reflected flowers
And shaken hues of summer : drifting down,
He dipped contented oars, and sighed, and slept.

Night, with a gust of wind, was in the ward,
Blowing the curtain to a glimmering curve.
Night. He was blind ; he could not see the stars
Glinting among the wraiths of wandering cloud ;
Queer blots of colour, purple, scarlet, green,
Flickered and faded in his drowning eyes.
Rain ; he could hear it rustling through the dark
Fragrance and passionless music woven as one ;
Warm rain on drooping roses ; pattering showers
That soak the woods ; not the harsh rain that sweeps
Behind the thunder, but a trickling peace
Gently and slowly washing life away.

. . . . . .

He stirred, shifting his body ; then the pain
Leaped like a prowling beast, and gripped and tore
His groping dreams with grinding claws and fangs.

But someone was beside him ; soon he lay
Shuddering because that evil thing had passed.
And Death, who'd stepped toward him, paused and stared.

Light many lamps and gather round his bed.
Lend him your eyes, warm blood, and will to live.
Speak to him ; rouse him ; you may save him yet.
He's young ; he hated war ; how should he die
When cruel old campaigners win safe through ?

But Death replied : " I choose him." So he went,
And there was silence on the summer night ;
Silence and safety ; and the veils of sleep.
Then, far away, the thudding of the guns.

COUNTER-ATTACK

We'd gained our first objective hours before
While dawn broke like a face with blinking eyes,
Pallid, unshaved and thirsty, blind with smoke.
Things seemed all right at first. We held their line,
With bombers posted, Lewis guns well placed,
And clink of shovels deepening the shallow trench.
The place was rotten with dead ; green clumsy legs
High-booted, sprawled and grovelled along the saps ;
And trunks, face downwards, in the sucking mud,
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags loosely filled ;
And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.

And then the rain began,—the jolly old rain!
A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
Staring across the morning blear with fog;
He wondered when the Allemands would get busy;
And then, of course, they started with five-nines
Traversing, sure as fate, and never a dud.
Mute in the clamour of shells he watched them burst,
Spouting dark earth and wire with gusts from hell,
While posturing giants dissolved in drifts of smoke.
He crouched and flinched, dizzy with galloping fear,
Sick for escape,—loathing the strangled horror
And butchered, frantic gestures of the dead.

An officer came blundering down the trench:
"Stand-to and man the fire-step!" On he went . . .
Gasping and bawling, "Fire-step. . . . Counter-attack!"
Then the haze lifted. Bombing on the right
Down the old sap: machine-guns on the left;
And stumbling figures looming out in front.
"O Christ, they're coming at us!" Bullets spat,
And he remembered his rifle . . . rapid fire . . .
And started blazing wildly. . . . Then a bang
Crumpled and spun him sideways, knocked him out
To grunt and wriggle: none heeded him; he choked
And fought the flapping veils of smothering gloom,
Lost in a blurred confusion of yells and groans. . . .
Down, and down, and down, he sank and drowned,
Bleeding to death. The counter-attack had failed.

DREAMERS

Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

EVERYONE SANG

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on—on—
and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:

My heart was shaken with tears ; and horror
Drifted away. . . . O, but Everyone
Was a bird ; and the song was wordless ; the singing will
never be done.

EARLY CHRONOLOGY

Slowly the daylight left our listening faces.

. . . . . .

Professor Brown with level baritone
Discoursed into the dusk.
Five thousand years
He guided us through scientific spaces
Of excavated History ; till the lone
Roads of research grew blurred ; and in our ears
Time was the rumoured tongues of vanished races,
And Thought a chartless Age of Ice and stone.

. . . . . .

The story ended. Then the darkened air
Flowered as he lit his pipe ; an aureole glowed
Enwreathed with smoke ; the moment's matchlight
showed
His rosy face, broad brow, and smooth grey hair,
Backed by the crowded book-shelves.
In his wake
An archæologist began to make
Assumptions about aqueducts (he quoted
Professor Sandstorm's book) ; and soon they floated
Through desiccated forests ; mangled myths ;
And argued easily round megaliths.

. . . . . .

Beyond the college garden something glinted ;
A copper moon climbed clear above the trees.
Some Lydian coin ? . . . Professor Brown agrees
That copper coins *were* in that culture minted ;
But, as her whitening way aloft she took,
I thought she had a pre-dynastic look.

SOLAR ECLIPSE

Observe these blue solemnities of sky
Offering for the academes of after-ages
A mythologic welkin freaked with white !

Listen : one tiny tinkling rivulet
Accentuates the super-sultry stillness
That drones on ripening landscapes which imply
Serene Parnassus plagued with amorous goats.

. . . . . .

Far down the vale Apollo has pursued
The noon-bedazzled nymph whose hunted heart
Holds but the trampling panic whence it fled.
And now the heavens are piled with darkening trouble
And counter-march of clouds that troop intent
Fire-crested into conflict.
Daphne turns
At the wood's edge in bronze and olive gloom :
Sickness assails the sun, whose blazing disc
Dwindles : the Eden of those auburn slopes
Lours in the tarnished copper of eclipses.

Yet virgin, in her god-impelled approach
To Græco-Roman ravishment, she waits
While the unsated python slides to crush
Her lust-eluding fleetness. Envious Jove
Rumbles Olympus. All the classic world
Leans breathless toward the legend she creates.

From thunderous vapour smites the immortal beam. . . .
Then, crowned with fangs of foliage, flames the god.

. . . . . .

Apollo! . . . Up the autumn valley echoes
A hollow shout from nowhere. Daphne's limbs
Lapse into laureldom: green-shadowed flesh
Writhes arborescent: glamour obscures her gaze
With blind and bossed distortion. She escapes.

FANTASIA ON A WITTELSBACH ATMOSPHERE

Drab drugget paths protect these polished floors
From tourist-soled attrition. Guide-book phrases
Co-ordinate fatigued and baffled brains
With mute ex-regal affluence. Simpering faces
Exposed in state-saloons and corridors
Survive the modes of soporific reigns.

A baton, and a battle (was it Blenheim?)
Respectfully remote; the steed curvetting
Beneath his flushed Elector: what's the betting
He failed? . . . no gouty poet lives to pen him

Campaign-concluding odes. Mark, too, the mien
(Obese in ermine, sceptred and serene)
Of goggling Max Augustus! Where's the Court
That equerried his junks down aisles of green
To chevy stags in sycophantic sport?

Nevertheless, while strolling past such glories,
(Van Dyck to Winterhalter; stiff brocade
And powder, to frock-coats and whiskered smiles)
My spirit shares with monarchismal Tories
The Fairy-tale of Flunkeydom, displayed
In feudal relicry of centuried styles.
My sympathy for Soviets notwithstanding—
(Dare one deplore the dullness of Democracy?)
I am touched, I am enticed, by super-lavish
Expense; half-cultured coxcomb Kings commanding
In palacefuls the trappings of Autocracy,
With all their country's coffers ripe to ravish!

. . . . . .

Outside, sham Renaissance façades evade
Modernity; a melancholic air
Half-masks them, while the sun-warmed windows stare
Affronted on the purposeless parade
Of pigmy visitors. In postures glum,
Like exiled Counts the statues mope aloof.
No vultured banner flaps above the roof:
And loyal gardens, drowsing in the hum
And slant of lapsing afternoon, seem sad.
Fountains upheave pale plumes against the sky,
Murmuring, "*Their Majesties came sauntering by*—

Was it but yesterday?" . . . Proud fountains sigh
Toward the long glades in golden foliage clad,
"*Kürfürsts could do no wrong.*" . . . And the woods reply,
"*Take them for what they were, they weren't so bad!*"

STORM ON FIFTH AVENUE

A SALLOW waiter brings me six huge oysters. . . .
Gloom shutters up the sunset with a plague
Of unpropitious twilight jagged asunder
By flashlight demonstrations. *Gee, what a peach
Of a climate!* (Pardon slang: these sultry storms
Afflict me with neurosis: rumbling thunder
Shakes my belief in academic forms.)

An oyster-coloured atmospheric rumpus
Beats up to blot the sunken daylight's gildings.
Against the looming cloud-bank, ivory-pale,
Stand twenty-storied blocks of office buildings.
Snatched upward on a gust, lost news-sheets sail
Forlorn in lone arena of mid-air;
Flapping like melancholy kites, they scare
My gaze, a note of wildness in the scene.

Out on the pattering side-walk, people hurry
For shelter, while the tempest swoops to scurry
Across to Brooklyn. Bellying figures clutch
At wide-brimmed hats and bend to meet the weather,
Alarmed for fresh-worn silks and flurried feather.

Then hissing deluge splashes down to beat
The darkly glistening flatness of the street.
Only the cars nose on through rain-lashed twilight:
Only the Sherman statue, angel-guided,
Maintains its mock-heroic martial gesture.

. . . . . .

A sallow waiter brings me beans and pork . . .
Outside there's fury in the firmament.
Ice-cream, of course, will follow; and I'm content.
O Babylon! O Carthage! O New York!

CONCERT-INTERPRETATION

(LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS)

THE Audience pricks an intellectual Ear. . . .
Stravinsky. . . . Quite the Concert of the Year!

. . . . . .

Forgetting now that none-so-distant date
When they (or folk facsimilar in state
Of mind) first heard with hisses—hoots—guffaws
This abstract Symphony; (they booed because
Stravinsky jumped their Wagner palisade
With modes that seemed cacophonous and queer;)
Forgetting now the hullabaloo they made,
The Audience pricks an intellectual Ear.

. . . . . .

Bassoons begin. . . . Sonority envelops
Our auditory innocence; and brings
To Me, I must admit, some drift of things
Omnific, seminal, and adolescent.

Polyphony through dissonance develops
A serpent-conscious Eden, crude but pleasant;
While vibro-atmospheric copulations
With mezzo-forte mysteries of noise
Prelude Stravinsky's statement of the joys
That unify the monkeydom of nations.

. . . . . .

This matter is most indelicate indeed!
Yet one perceives no symptom of stampede.
The Stalls remain unruffled: craniums gleam
Swept by a storm of pizzicato chords:
Elaborate ladies reassure their lords
With lifting brows that signify "Supreme!"
While orchestrated gallantry of goats
Impugns the astigmatic programme-notes.

In the Grand Circle one observes no sign
Of riot: peace prevails along the line.
And in the Gallery, cargoed to capacity,
No tremor bodes eruptions and alarms.
They are listening to this not-quite-new audacity
As though it were by someone dead,—like Brahms.

. . . . . .

But savagery pervades Me; I am frantic
With corybantic rupturing of laws.
Come, dance, and seize this clamorous chance to function
Creatively,—abandoning compunction
In anti-social rhapsodic applause!
Lynch the conductor! Jugulate the drums!
Butcher the brass! Ensanguinate the strings!
Throttle the flutes! . . . Stravinsky's April comes

With pitiless pomp and pain of sacred springs. . . .
Incendiarise the Hall with resinous fires
Of sacrificial fiddles scorched and snapping ! . . . .

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the music blazes and expires ;
And the delighted Audience is clapping.

FALLING ASLEEP

Voices moving about in the quiet house :
Thud of feet and a muffled shutting of doors :
Everyone yawning. Only the clocks are alert.

Out in the night there's autumn-smelling gloom
Crowded with whispering trees ; across the park
A hollow cry of hounds like lonely bells :
And I know that the clouds are moving across the moon ;
The low, red, rising moon. Now herons call
And wrangle by their pool ; and hooting owls
Sail from the wood above pale stooks of oats.

Waiting for sleep, I drift from thoughts like these ;
And where to-day was dream-like, build my dreams.
Music . . . there was a bright white room below,
And someone singing a song about a soldier,
One hour, two hours ago : and soon the song
Will be "*last night*" ; but now the beauty swings
Across my brain, ghost of remembered chords
Which still can make such radiance in my dream
That I can watch the marching of my soldiers,
And count their faces ; faces ; sunlit faces.

Falling asleep . . . the herons, and the hounds. . . .
September in the darkness ; and the world
I've known ; all fading past me into peace.

EDWARD SHANKS

A NIGHT-PIECE

Come out and walk. The last few drops of light
Drain silently out of the cloudy blue;
The trees are full of the dark-stooping night,
The fields are wet with dew.

All's quiet in the wood but, far away,
Down the hillside and out across the plain,
Moves, with long trail of white that marks its way,
The softly panting train.

Come through the clearing. Hardly now we see
The flowers, save dark or light against the grass,
Or glimmering silver on a scented tree
That trembles as we pass.

Hark now! So far, so far . . . that distant song . . .
Move down the rustling grasses with your feet.
The dusk is full of sounds, that all along
The muttering boughs repeat.

So far, so faint, we lift our heads in doubt.
Wind, or the blood that beats within our ears,
Has feigned a dubious and delusive note,
Such as a dreamer hears.

Again . . . again! The faint sounds rise and fail.
So far the enchanted tree, the song so low. . . .
A drowsy thrush? A waking nightingale?
Silence. We do not know.

THE GLOW-WORM

The pale road winds faintly upward into the dark skies,
And beside it on the rough grass that the wind invisibly stirs,
Sheltered by sharp-speared gorse and the berried junipers,
Shining steadily with a green light, the glow-worm lies.

We regard it; and this hill and all the other hills
That fall in folds to the river, very smooth and steep,
And the hangers and brakes that the darkness thickly fills
Fade like phantoms round the light and night is deep, so deep,—

That all the world is emptiness about the still flame
And we are small shadows standing lost in the huge night.
We gather up the glow-worm, stooping with dazzled sight,
And carry it to the little enclosed garden whence we came,

And place it on the short grass. Then the shadowy flowers fade,
The walls waver and melt and the houses disappear
And the solid town trembles into insubstantial shade
Round the light of the burning glow-worm, steady and clear.

Edward Shanks

THE HALT

" *Mark time in front ! Rear fours cover ! Company—halt ! Order arms ! Stand at—ease ! Stand easy.*" A sudden hush ;
And then the talk began with a mighty rush—
" You weren't ever in step—The sergeant—It wasn't my fault—
Well, the Lord be praised at least for a ten minutes' halt."
We sat on a gate and watched them easing and shifting ;
Out of the distance a faint, keen breath came drifting,
From the sea behind the hills, and the hedges were salt.

Where do you halt now ? Under what hedge do you lie ?
Where the tall poplars are fringing the white French roads ?
And smoke I have not seen discolours the foreign sky ?
Is the company resting there as we rested together
Stamping its feet and readjusting its loads
And looking with wary eyes at the drooping weather ?

A HOLLOW ELM

What hast thou not withstood,
Tempest-despising tree,
Whose bleak and riven wood
Gapes now so hollowly,
What rains have beaten thee through many years,
What snows from off thy branches dripped like tears ?

Calmly thou standest now
Upon thy sunny mound;
The first spring breezes flow
Past with sweet dizzy sound;
Yet on thy pollard top the branches few
Stand stiffly out, disdain to murmur too.

The children at thy foot
Open new-lighted eyes,
Where, on gnarled bark and root,
The soft, warm sunshine lies—
Dost thou, upon thine ancient sides, resent
The touch of youth, quick and impermanent?

These, at the beck of spring,
Live in the moment still;
Thy boughs unquivering,
Remembering winter's chill,
And many other winters past and gone,
Are mocked, not cheated, by the transient sun.

Hast thou so much withstood,
Tempest-despising tree,
That now thy hollow wood
Stiffens disdainfully
Against the soft spring airs and soft spring rain,
Knowing too well that winter comes again?

Edward Shanks

THE RETURN

I

Now into hearts long empty of the sun
The morning comes again with golden light
And all the shades of the half-dusk are done
And all the crevices are suddenly bright.
So gradually had love lain down to sleep,
We knew it not: but when we saw his head
Pillowed and sunken in a trance so deep
We whispered shuddering that he was dead.
Then you like Psyche took the light and leant
Over the monster lying in his place,
Daring, despairing, trembling as you bent. . . .
But love raised up his new-awakening face
And into our hearts long empty of the sun
We felt the sky-distilled bright liquor run.

II

When love comes back that went in mist and cloud
He comes triumphant in his pomp and power;
Voices that muttered long are glad and loud
To mark the sweetness of the sudden hour.
How could we live so long in that half-light?
That opiate shadow, where the deadened nerves
So soon forget how hills and winds are bright,
That drugged and sleepy dusk, that only serves
With false shades to conceal the emptiness
Of hearts whence love has stolen unawares,
Where creeping doubts and dumb, dull sorrows press
And weariness with blind eyes gapes and stares.

This was our state, but now a happy song
Rings through our inner sunlight all day long.

III

When that I lay in a mute agony,
I nothing saw nor heard nor felt nor thought,
The inner self, the quintessential me,
In that blind hour beyond all sense was brought
Hard against pain. I had no body, no mind,
Nought but the point that suffers joy or loss,
No eyes in sudden blackness to be blind,
No brain for swift regrets to run across.
But when you touched me, when your hot tears fell,
The point that had been nothing else but pain
Changed into rapture by a miracle,
In which all raptures known before were vain.
Thus loss which bared the utmost shivering nerve
For joy's precursor in the heart did serve.

CLOUDS

Over this hill the high clouds float all day
And trail their long, soft shadows on the grass,
And now above the meadows make delay
And now with regular, swift motion pass.
Now comes a threatening drift from the south-west,
In smoky colours drest,
That spills far out upon the chequered plain
Its burden of dark rain;

Then hard behind a stately galleon
Sails onward with its piled and carven towers
Stiff sculptured like a heap of marble flowers,
Rigid, unaltering, a miracle
Of moulded surfaces, whereon the light
Shines steadily, intolerably bright;
Now on a livelier wind a wandering bell
Of delicate vapour comes, invisibly hung,
Like feathers from the seeding thistle flung,
And saunters wantonly far out of sight.
O God, who fill'st with shifting imagery
The blue page of the sky,
Thus writ'st thou also, with as vague a pen,
In the immenser hearts of dreaming men.

THE ROCK POOL

This is the Sea. In these uneven walls
A wave lies prisoned. Far and far away,
Outward to ocean, as the slow tide falls,
Her sisters, through the capes that hold the bay,
Dancing in lovely liberty recede.
But lovely in captivity she lies,
Filled with soft colours, where the waving weed
Moves gently, and discloses to our eyes
Blurred shining veins of rock and lucent shells
Under the light-shot water, and here repose
Small quiet fish, and dimly-glowing bells
Of sleeping sea-anemones that close
Their tender fronds and will not now awake
Till on these rocks the waves returning break.

THE SWIMMERS

The cove's a shining plate of blue and green,
With darker belts between
The trough and crest of the slow-rising swell,
And the great rocks throw purple shadows down,
Where transient sun-sparks wink and burst and drown
And glimmering pebbles lie too deep to tell,
Hidden or shining as the shadow wavers.
And everywhere the restless sun-steeped air
Trembles and quavers,
As though it were
More saturate with light than it could bear.

Now come the swimmers from slow-dripping caves,
Where the shy fern creeps under the veined roof,
And wading out meet with glad breast the waves.
One holds aloof,
Climbing alone the reef with shrinking feet,
That scarce endure the jagged stones' dull beat
Till on the edge he poises
And flies to cleave the water, vanishing
In wreaths of white, with echoing liquid noises,
And swims beneath, a vague, distorted thing.
Now all the other swimmers leave behind
The crystal shallow and the foam-wet shore
And sliding into deeper water find
A living coolness in the lifting flood,
And through their bodies leaps the sparkling blood,
So that they feel the faint earth's drought no more.

There now they float, heads raised above the green,
White bodies cloudily seen,
Farther and farther from the brazen rock,
On which the hot air shakes, on which the tide
Fruitlessly throws with gentle, soundless shock
The cool and lagging wave. Out, out they go,
And now upon a mirrored cloud they ride
Or turning over, with soft strokes and slow,
Slide on like shadows in a tranquil sky.
Behind them, on the tall, parched cliff, the dry
And dusty grasses grow
In shallow ledges of the arid stone,
Starving for coolness and the touch of rain.
But, though to earth they must return again,
Here comes the soft sea-airs to meet them, blown
Over the surface of the outer deep,
Scarce moving, staying, falling, straying, gone,
Light and delightful as the touch of sleep. . . .
One wakes and splashes round,
And, as by magic, all the others wake
From that sea-dream, and now with rippling sound
Their rapid arms the enchanted silence break.
And now again the crystal shallows take
The gleaming bodies whose cool hour is done ;
They pause upon the beach, they pause and sigh,
Then vanish in the caverns one by one.

Soon the wet foot-marks on the stones are dry :
The cove sleeps on beneath the unwavering sun.

Edward Shanks

THE STORM

We wake to hear the storm come down,
Sudden on roof and pane;
The thunder's loud and the hasty wind
Hurries the beating rain.

The rain slackens, the wind blows gently,
The gust grows gentle and stills,
And the thunder, like a breaking stick,
Stumbles about the hills.

The drops still hang on leaf and thorn,
The downs stand up more green;
The sun comes out again in power
And the sky is washed and clean.

TO THE UNIMPLORED BELOVED

Remain, for me, chaste, unapproached, unstirred,
Never from me shall you hear any word,
Asking that you should give me what I give:
To-day I speak to you, but even to-day
You shall know it is not you to whom I say
I love you, and shall love you while I live.

Once in these years my lips have touched your lips,
O will-benumbing sweetness!—so one sips
Timidly a magical, an immortal wine
Too strong for human bodies, only to try,
Saying that if I die, one can but die,
But if I live, that dangerous joy was mine.

Now move no footstep from your place, do not
Repeat that moment nor by any jot
  Of speech or touch of hand or glance of eye
Show to me any more than common kindness,
But go your lovely way in lovely blindness
  —You the still seen, the enraptured seër I.

For gathered flowers grow limp, bright-dusted wings
Of handled butterflies grow shabby things,
  The mistress once enjoyed becomes a woman
—Attentive, kindly, comforting, too near,
Till what was magic is no more than dear—
  So, knowing I am, I will not think you human.

Some men love beauties they have found in books,
Or who from pictures with unfading looks
  Gaze out upon this changing, fading life,
I you, and thus, and I would have you be
Ever the same and still remote from me,
  Only an image, neither lover nor wife.

THE SHADOW

Death, would I feared not thee,
  But ever can I see
  Thy mutable shadow thrown
Upon the walls of Life's warm, cheerful room.
  Companioned or alone,
I feel the presence of that following gloom,
  Like one who vaguely knows
Behind his back the shade his body throws—
'Tis not thy shadow only, 'tis my own!

I face towards the light
That rises fair and bright
Over wide fields asleep,
But still I know that stealthy darkness there
Close at my heels doth creep,
My ghostly company, my haunting care;
And if the light be strong
Before my eyes, through pleasant hours and long,
Then, then, the shadow is most black and deep.

THE SHADOWGRAPH

I PLAY a game that children play,
Tracing your shadow on the wall;
But on the wall the shadows stray
As the wood-flames flare and fall.

Your image rests in quiet now,
A moment. Quickly I can draw
The profile, chin, mouth, nose and brow
And close-coiled hair. But what I saw,

Ere half the line is traced, has gone:
The pencil must begin anew,
And all so painfully begun
But wastes the wall with scrawls untrue.

Until at last the lamp is brought,
The game is done, and I can see
The tangled scribble I have wrought
Grimacing at me mockingly.

MEMORY

In silence and in darkness memory wakes
Her million sheathèd buds and breaks
That day-long winter when the light and noise
And hard bleak breath of the outward looking will
Made barren her tender soil, when every voice
Of her million airy birds was muffled or still.

One bud-sheath breaks :
One sudden voice awakes.
What change grew in our hearts seeing one night
That moth-winged ship drifting across the bay,
  Her broad sail dimly white
On cloudy waters and hills as vague as they ?
Some new thing touched our spirits with distant delight,
Half seen, half noticed, as we loitered down,
Talking in whispers, to the little town,
  Down from the narrow hill
—Talking in whispers, for the air so still
Imposed its stillness on our lips and made
A quiet equal with the equal shade
That filled the slanting walk. That phantom now
Slides with slack canvas and unwhispering prow
Through the dark sea that this dark room has made.

Or the night of the closed eyes will turn to day
And all day's colours start out of the grey.
The sun burns on the water. The tall hills
Push up their shady groves into the sky

And fail and cease where the intense light spills
Its parching torrent on the gaunt and dry
Rock of the farther mountains, whence the snow
That softened their harsh edges long is gone
  And nothing tempers now
The hot flood falling on the barren stone.

  O memory, take and keep
All that my eyes, your servants, bring you home—
Those other days beneath the low white dome
  Of smooth-spread clouds that creep
  As slow and soft as sleep,
When shade grows pale and the cypress stands upright,
  Distinct in the cool light,
Rigid and solid as a dark, hewn stone;
  And many another night
That melts in darkness on the narrow quays
And changes every colour and every tone
And soothes the water to a softer ease,
When under constellations coldly bright
The homeward sailors sing their way to bed
On ships that motionless in harbour float.
The circling harbour-lights flash green and red;
And, out beyond, a steady travelling boat
Breaking the swell with slow industrious oars
  At each stroke pours
Pale lighted water from the lifted blade.
Now in the painted houses all around
  Slow darkening windows call
The empty unwatched middle of the night.

The tide's few inches rise without a sound.
On the black promontory's windless head,
The last awake, the fireflies rise and fall
And tangle up their dithering skeins of light.

O memory, take and keep
All that my eyes, your servants, bring you home!
Thick through the changing year
The unexpected, rich-charged moments come.
That you 'twixt wake and sleep
In the lids of the closed eyes shall make appear.
This is life's certain good,
Though in the end it be not good at all
When the dark end arises
And the stripped, startled spirit must let fall
The amulets that could
Prevail with life's but not death's sad devices.

Then, like a child from whom an older child
Forces its gathered treasures,
Its beads and shells and strings of withered flowers,
Tokens of recent pleasures,
The soul must lose in eyes weeping and wild
Those prints of vanished hours.

Edward Shanks

TO THE UNKNOWN VOICE

Speak once again, forgotten voice!
How, how gladly would I hear thee
Guide my blind and mortal choice,
Yet long months I come not near thee.
Whither hast thou then removed,
Or did I never hear thee?
Was that whispering in the mind
Which with sense intent I divined
Only the stir of blood in pulses aching?
Hast thou never to my ear
Stooped thy sweet mouth, my spirit waking?
Speak now, if speak thou canst. The hot blood shaking
Temples and arteries I know,
And in the loud confusion I shall know thee.
Speak and I will hear,
Heart, will and spirit all shall show thee.

Ah, no, no, no!
In the vast echoing cave
Floored by green earth and roofed by empty sky
Nothing but wind and wave
And no reply
Save vain reverberation of my cry.

Forgotten voice, speak, speak again,
Clearer than winds or waves or men.
Like a lost friend in countries far away,
Thou hast been for so long a day:
Yet rise again, yet speak again to me;
I dwindle, wanting thee!

THE HAUNTING

The owl that lives in the hole in the oak
Need fear no more your prying hand
That once on his daylight slumber broke
In a game he never could understand.

You and I will go together no more
And, setting our hands on the clock's loud chime,
Strike four o'clock at twenty to four
That the village may live by a fancied time.

The apples will hang on the drooping bough
And you will not pluck at them as you pass:
You never go down the pathway now
Leading your pony out to grass.

You are gone from there and I could not stay
In a place where ever I seemed to see
A ghost that slipped through the winter day
Too quickly to stop and speak to me.

For the ghosts of the living walk, I know,
More often than those of the peaceful dead:
Have I not through those alleys seen you go,
A tall, slim girl, with a proud, small head?

If I walk, a ghost, in the garden yet,
In the ghost of *our* garden let it be:
With last year's rain may the lawns be wet,
And spirits of leaves on a phantom tree.

Let the sap of the wounded sumach bleed
Where we broke the boughs last year to pass,
Let the poppy rattle her dried-up seed
And last year's fir-cones lie on the grass.

This year I know not, I will not know,
If new flowers bloom for the voyaging bee,
If here the bushes more thickly grow
Or there a sapling is sprung to a tree.

There must be no change. If I found a change,
Then the phantom-I might find you there,
Not a ghost but the new year's you, and strange,
And the last year's you not anywhere.

THE FAIRY'S CHILD

I HAVE known love, and thrice or more
Has beauty on my pleading smiled :
For one or two my heart was sore
And one I loved was a fairy's child.

Fairies are neither good nor evil,
But strange : they follow different laws.
Fool that I was in her to level
Human effect and fairy cause !

With that deception sick and spent
I wept alone, but now I see
She was, though wide her footsteps went,
Faithful to love if not to me.

Edward Shanks

SONNET

He who so long a shadow contemplated
(The storm being done, a long stilled voice hath said)
Finds himself in the end with a shadow mated
And, quick though it move, a shadow is but dead.
We love not women but the images
Ourselves have made of Beauty, Kindness, Youth :
Vain shapes that any candle throws may please
Till unexpected movement tells the truth.
It was not you I loved, it was not you !
It was your beauty was the flickering fire
That on the wall I watched so eagerly threw
A gibing shadow of my own desire.
But, should I now to the real woman turn,
Might true love from that first true sight be born ?

THE BITTEN GRASS

How coldly I survey
This windless corner in the bleached and wintry gorse
Which was our shelter once, day after day.
But now my horse
Is halted here by habit, not the rein,
And here we stay,
I dreaming coldly back, he reaching for the grass,
In him no hunger and in me no pain,
But in us both desires that idly pass.
How sluggish is the beast, he will not move,
How sluggish is my heart that has outgrown its love !

So short a time, four seasons have not gone—
This, if my heart forgets, my eyes must know.
Grass does not grow
In autumn or in winter: till the sun
Comes overhead again, there still shall be
These white, dry, bitten stalks to testify
That here long summer mornings we would lie
While the ponies grazed beside us peaceably.
These bitten stalks, a circle eaten dry
And trampled down, this was our shelter, this
Was where you drew me down, begging another kiss.

THE LUCKY DAY

(*Gliding Competition on Itford Hill, October 21st,* 1922.)

Come down, belovèd, from the crowded hill:
The darkening air grows chill,
Though still the man-bird sways from spur to spur,
Triumphant in the dusk, and still below
The motor-horns applaud with harsh hurray.
We have seen Fokker going to and fro
His patient hundred yards of conquered air
And still at every turning halt and sway:
We have seen Raynham slide
A mile before the wind and slip and fall:
We have seen spurred by all
The wind's invisible and nervous side.
And now away,
The last jog homeward ends our holiday.

Kick Polly's ribs and come. The hillside way
Gives us a slow and careful journey down.
Come, now you see,
Far off, the crowned lights of the distant town
Beckon us home to stable and to tea.
Love loves the lucky, so they say,
And I have had my luck to-day,
Seeing you when I thought we had said good-bye.
To-morrow I am going away,
But this last luck new knots will tie
In the handkerchief of your memory.

I do not trust you yet
Not to forget;
But better I should go and take my chance.
It is thought that absence sometimes may enhance
The lover's gifts for whomso he may love
And that his image more may move
Her mind than presence or than bold advance
Of speech or touch. So think I not, but now
To-morrow with an easier heart I go,
Luck having blessed me,
Though on this hill's open and crowded brow
Only luck has kissed me.

We have seen Raynham slide
A mile before the wind and slip and fall,
And also, side by side,
Maneyrolle and Gray
Against a darkening and a stormier day
Ride out the sudden squall.

These men, in love with air—though who knows why?—
Trust luck to see them through the enterprise
And in the risk discover ecstasy,
Being better lucky than wise.
As they on unknown currents fall or rise,
So I on luck or on your favour,
Both as unknown to science, as uncharted
As the wild air's behaviour,
Will stake, glad-hearted,
All that I am or may be, all that is I.

Love loves the lucky, so they say,
And luck has been my friend to-day. . . .

WOMAN'S SONG

No more upon my bosom rest thee,
Too often have my hands caressed thee,
  My lips thou knowest well, too well;
Lean to my heart no more thine ear
My spirit's living truth to hear
  —It has no more to tell.

In what dark night, in what strange night,
Burnt to the butt the candle's light
  That lit our room so long?
I do not know, I thought I knew
How love could be both sweet and true:
  I also thought it strong.

Where has the flame departed? Where,
Amid the empty waste of air,
  Is that which dwelt with us?
Was it a fancy? Did we make
Only a show for dead love's sake,
  It being so piteous?

No more against my bosom press thee,
Seek no more that my hands caress thee,
  Leave the sad lips thou hast known so well;
If to my heart thou lean thine ear
There grieving thou shalt only hear
  Vain murmuring of an empty shell.

C. H. SORLEY

Born 1895

Killed in Action 1915

GERMAN RAIN

The heat came down and sapped away my powers.
The laden heat came down and drowned my brain,
Till through the weight of overcoming hours
I felt the rain.

Then suddenly I saw what more to see
I never thought: old things renewed, retrieved,
The rain that fell in England fell on me,
And I believed.

ALL THE HILLS AND VALES

All the hills and vales along
Earth is bursting into song,
And the singers are the chaps
Who are going to die perhaps.
O sing, marching men,
Till the valleys ring again.
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,
So be glad, when you are sleeping.

Cast away regret and rue,
Think what you are marching to.
Little live, great pass.
Jesus Christ and Barabbas
Were found the same day.
This died, that went his way.

So sing with joyful breath.
For why, you are going to death.
Teeming earth will surely store
All the gladness that you pour.

Earth that never doubts nor fears,
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men, marching
On the road to death, sing;
Pour your gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.

From the hills and valleys earth
Shouts back the sound of mirth,
Tramp of feet and lilt of song
Ringing all the road along.
All the music of their going,
Ringing, swinging, glad song-throwing,
Earth will echo still, when foot
Lies numb and voice mute.
On, marching men, on
To the gates of death with song.
Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,
So you may be glad, though sleeping.
Strew your gladness on earth's bed,
So be merry, so be dead.

JAMES STEPHENS

DEIRDRE

Do not let any woman read this verse ;
It is for men, and after them their sons
And their sons' sons.

When we remember Deirdre and her tale,
The time comes when our hearts sink utterly ;
And that her lips are dust.

Once she did tread the earth : men took her hand ;
They looked into her eyes and said their say,
And she replied to them.

More than a thousand years it is since she
Was beautiful : she trod the waving grass ;
She saw the clouds.

A thousand years ! The grass is still the same,
The clouds as lovely as they were that time
When Deirdre was alive.

But there has never been a woman born
Who was so beautiful, not one so beautiful
Of all the women born.

Let all men go apart and mourn together ;
No man can ever love her ; not a man
Can ever be her lover.

No man can bend before her : no man say—
What could one say to her ? There are no words
That one could say to her !

Now she is but a story that is told
Beside the fire ! No man can ever be
The friend of that poor queen.

THE GOAT PATHS

The crooked paths go every way
Upon the hill—they wind about
Through the heather in and out
Of the quiet sunniness.
And there the goats, day after day,
Stray in sunny quietness,
Cropping here and cropping there,
As they pause and turn and pass,
Now a bit of heather spray,
Now a mouthful of the grass.

In the deeper sunniness,
In the place where nothing stirs,
Quietly in quietness,
In the quiet of the furze,
For a time they come and lie
Staring on the roving sky.

If you approach they run away,
They leap and stare, away they bound,
With a sudden angry sound,

To the sunny quietude ;
Crouching down where nothing stirs
In the silence of the furze,
Crouching down again to brood
In sunny solitude.

If I were as wise as they
I would stray apart and brood,
I would beat a hidden way
Through the quiet heather spray
To a sunny solitude ;
And should you come I'd run away,
I would make an angry sound,
I would stare and turn and bound
To the deeper quietude,
To the place where nothing stirs
In the silence of the furze.

In that airy quietness
I would think as long as they ;
Through the quiet sunniness
I would stray away to brood
By a hidden beaten way
In a sunny solitude.

I would think until I found
Something I can never find,
Something lying on the ground
In the bottom of my mind.

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

I CLING and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of
Morning, O:
Or fling my wing
On the air, and bring
To sleepier birds a warning, O:
That the night's in flight,
And the sun's in sight,
And the dew is the grass adorning, O:
And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing,
Up by the river,
Down the dell,
To the little wee nest,
Where the big tree fell,
So early in the morning, O.

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit
When his light so bright is shining, O:
Or sit and fit
My plumes, or knit
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining, O:
And she with glee
Shows unto me
Underneath her wings reclining, O:
And I sing that Peg
Has an egg, egg, egg,

Up by the oat-field,
Round the mill
Past the meadow
Down the hill,
So early in the morning, O.

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop
Through the trees, and then go soaring, O :
To group with a troop
On the gusty poop
While the wind behind is roaring, O :
I skim and swim
By a cloud's red rim
And up to the azure flooring, O :
And my wide wings drip
As I slip, slip, slip
Down through the rain-drops,
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg
So early in the morning, O.

EDWARD WYNDHAM TENNANT

Born 1895

Killed in Action 1916

HOME THOUGHTS IN LAVENTIE

Green gardens in Laventie!
Soldiers only know the street
Where the mud is churned and splashed about
By battle-wending feet;
And yet beside one stricken house there is a glimpse of grass,
Look for it when you pass.

Beyond the Church whose pitted spire
Seems balanced on a strand
Of swaying stone and tottering brick
Two roofless ruins stand,
And here behind the wreckage where the back wall should have been
We found a garden green.

The grass was never trodden on,
The little path of gravel
Was overgrown with celandine,
No other folk did travel
Along its weedy surface, but the nimble-footed mouse
Running from house to house.

So all among the vivid blades
Of soft and tender grass
We lay, nor heard the limber wheels
That pass and ever pass,
In noisy continuity until their stony rattle
Seems in itself a battle.

At length we rose up from this ease
Of tranquil happy mind,
And searched the garden's little length
A fresh pleasaunce to find ;
And there, some yellow daffodils and jasmine hanging high
Did rest the tired eye.

The fairest and most fragrant
Of the many sweets we found,
Was a little bush of Daphne flower
Upon a grassy mound,
And so thick were the blossoms set and so divine the scent
That we were well content.

Hungry for spring I bent my head,
The perfume fanned my face,
And all my soul was dancing
In that lovely little place,
Dancing with a measured step from wrecked and shattered towns
Away . . . upon the Downs.

I saw green banks of daffodil,
Slim poplars in the breeze,
Great tan-brown hares in gusty March
A-couching on the leas :
And meadows with their glittering streams and silver scurrying dace,
Home—what a perfect place !

Belgium, March 1916.

EDWARD THOMAS

Born 1877

Killed in Action 1917

ASPENS

All day and night, save winter, every weather,
Above the inn, the smithy, and the shop,
The aspens at the cross-roads talk together
Of rain, until their last leaves fall from the top.

Out of the blacksmith's cavern comes the ringing
Of hammer, shoe, and anvil; out of the inn
The clink, the hum, the roar, the random singing—
The sounds that for these fifty years have been.

The whisper of the aspens is not drowned,
And over lightless pane and footless road,
Empty as sky, with every other sound
Not ceasing, calls their ghosts from their abode.

A silent smithy, a silent inn, not fails
In the bare moonlight or the thick-furred gloom,
In tempest or the night of nightingales,
To turn the cross-roads to a ghostly room.

And it would be the same were no house near;
Over all sorts of weather, men, and times,
Aspens must shake their leaves and men may hear
But need not listen, more than to my rhymes.

Whatever wind blows, while they and I have leaves
We cannot other than an aspen be
That ceaselessly, unreasonably grieves,
Or so men think who like a different tree.

THE BROOK

SEATED once by a brook, watching a child
Chiefly that paddled, I was thus beguiled.
Mellow the blackbird sang and sharp the thrush
Nor far off in the oak and hazel brush,
Unseen. There was a scent like honeycomb
From mugwort dull. And down upon the dome
Of the stone the cart-horse kicks against so oft
A butterfly alighted. From aloft
He took the heat of the sun, and from below,
On the hot stone he perched contented so,
As if never a cart would pass again
That way; as if I were the last of men
And he the first of insects to have earth
And sun together and to know their worth.
I was divided between him and the gleam,
The motion, and the voices, of the stream,
The waters running frizzled over gravel,
That never vanish and for ever travel.
A grey fly catches silent on a fence
And I sat as if we had been there since
The horseman and the horse lying beneath
The fir-tree-covered barrow on the heath,
The horseman and the horse with silver shoes,
Galloped the downs last. All that I could lose
I lost. And then the child's voice raised the dead.
"No one's been here before" was what she said
And what I felt, yet never should have found
A word for, while I gathered sight and sound.

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THE BRIDGE

I HAVE come a long way to-day :
On a ſtrange bridge alone,
Remembering friends, old friends,
I reſt, without smile or moan,
As they remember me without smile or moan.

All are behind, the kind
And the unkind too, no more
To-night than a dream. The ſtream
Runs ſoftly yet drowns the Paſt,
The dark-lit ſtream has drowned the Future and the Paſt.

No traveller has reſt more bleſt
Than this moment brief between
Two lives, when the Night's firſt lights
And shades hide what has never been,
Things goodlier, lovelier, dearer, than will be or have been.

LIGHTS OUT

I HAVE come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Foreſt where all muſt lose
Their way, however ſtraight,
Or winding, soon or late ;
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track
That, since the dawn's first crack,
Up to the forest brink,
Deceived the travellers
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends,
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter and leave alone
I know not how.

The tall forest towers ;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf ;
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

WORDS

Out of us all
That make rhymes,
Will you choose
Sometimes—
As the winds use
A crack in the wall
Or a drain,
Their joy or their pain
To whistle through—
Choose me,
You English words?

I know you:
You are light as dreams,
Tough as oak,
Precious as gold,
As poppies and corn,
Or an old cloak;
Sweet as our birds
To the ear,
As the linnet note
In the heat
Of Midsummer:
Strange as the races
Of dead and unborn:
Strange and sweet
Equally.
And familiar,
To the eye,
As the dearest faces

That a man knows,
And as lost homes are :
But though older far
Than oldest yew,—
As our hills are, old,—
Worn new
Again and again :
Young as our streams
After rain :
And as dear
As the earth which you prove
That we love.

Make me content
With some sweetness
From Wales
Whose nightingales
Have no wings,—
From Wiltshire and Kent
And Herefordshire,
And the villages there,—
From the names, and the things,
No less.
Let me sometimes dance
With you,
Or climb
Or stand perchance
In ecstasy,
Fixed and free
In a rhyme,
As poets do.

TALL NETTLES

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
As well as any bloom upon a flower
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

THE PATH

Running along a bank, a parapet
That saves from the precipitous wood below
The level road, there is a path. It serves
Children for looking down the long smooth steep,
Between the legs of beech and yew, to where
A fallen tree checks the sight: while men and women
Content themselves with the road, and what they see
Over the bank, and what the children tell.
The path, winding like silver, trickles on,
Bordered and ever invaded by thinnest moss
That tries to cover roots and crumbling chalk
With gold, olive, and emerald, but in vain.
The children wear it. They have flattened the bank
On top, and silvered it between the moss
With the current of their feet, year after year.

But the road is houseless, and leads not to school.
To see a child is rare there, and the eye
Has but the road, the wood that overhangs
And underyawns it, and the path that looks
As if it led on to some legendary
Or fancied place where men have wished to go
And stay; till, sudden, it ends where the wood ends.

SWEDES

They have taken the gable from the roof of clay
On the long swede pile. They have let in the sun
To the white and gold and purple of curled fronds
Unsunned. It is a sight more tender-gorgeous
At the wood-corner where Winter moans and drips
Than when, in the Valley of the Tombs of Kings,
A boy crawls down into a Pharaoh's tomb
And, first of Christian men, beholds the mummy,
God and monkey, chariot and throne and vase,
Blue pottery, alabaster, and gold.

But dreamless long-dead Amen-hotep lies.
This is the dream of Winter, sweet as Spring.

W. J. TURNER

ROMANCE

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the Master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away:

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatapetl,
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away !

THE CAVES OF AUVERGNE

He carved the red deer and the bull
Upon the smooth cave rock,
Returned from war with belly full,
And scarred with many a knock,
He carved the red deer and the bull
Upon the smooth cave rock.

The stars flew by the cave's wide door,
The clouds wild trumpets blew,
Trees rose in wild dreams from the floor,
Flowers with dream faces grew
Up to the sky, and softly hung
Golden and white and blue.

The woman ground her heap of corn,
Her heart a guarded fire ;
The wind played in his trembling soul
Like a hand upon a lyre,
The wind drew faintly on the stone
Symbols of his desire :

The red deer of the forest dark,
Whose antlers cut the sky,

That vanishes into the mirk
  And like a dream flits by,
And by an arrow slain at last,
  Is but the wind's dark body.

The bull that stands in marshy lakes
  As motionless and still
As a dark rock jutting from a plain
  Without a tree or hill;
The bull that is the sign of life,
  Its sombre, phallic will.

And from the dead, white eyes of them
  The wind springs up anew,
It blows upon the trembling heart,
  And bull and deer renew
Their flitting life in the dim past
  When that dead Hunter drew.

I sit beside him in the night,
  And, fingering his red stone,
I chase through endless forests dark
  Seeking that thing unknown,
That which is not red deer or bull,
  But which by them was shown:

By those stiff shapes in which he drew
  His soul's exalted cry,
When flying down the forests dark
  He slew and knew not why,

When he was filled with song, and strength
Flowed to him from the sky.

The wind blows from red deer and bull,
The clouds wild trumpets blare,
Trees rise in wild dreams from the earth,
Flowers with dream faces stare;
O Hunter, your own shadow stands
Within your forest lair!

ECSTASY

I saw a frieze on whitest marble drawn
Of boys who sought for shells along the shore,
Their white feet shedding pallor in the sea,
The shallow sea, the spring-time sea of green
That faintly creamed against the cold, smooth pebbles.

The air was thin, their limbs were delicate,
The wind had graven their small eager hands
To feel the forests and the dark nights of Asia
Behind the purple bloom of the horizon,
Where sails would float and slowly melt away.

Their naked, pure, and grave, unbroken silence
Filled the soft air as gleaming, limpid water
Fills a spring sky those days when rain is lying
In shattered bright pools on the wind-dried roads,
And their sweet bodies were wind-purified.

One held a shell unto his shell-like ear
And there was music carven in his face,
His eyes half-closed, his lips just breaking open
To catch the lulling, mazy, coralline roar
Of numberless caverns filled with singing seas.

And all of them were hearkening as to singing
Of far-off voices thin and delicate,
Voices too fine for any mortal mind
To blow into the whorls of mortal ears—
And yet those sounds flowed from their grave, sweet faces.

And as I looked I heard that delicate music,
And I became as grave, as calm, as still
As those carved boys. I stood upon that shore,
I felt the cool sea dream around my feet,
My eyes were staring at the far horizon :

And the wind came and purified my limbs,
And the stars came and set within my eyes,
And snowy clouds rested upon my shoulders,
And the blue sky shimmered deep within me,
And I sang like a carven pipe of music.

KENT IN WAR

The pebbly brook is cold to-night,
  Its water soft as air,
A clear, cold, crystal-bodied wind
  Shadowless and bare,
Leaping and running in this world
  Where dark-horned cattle stare :

Where dark-horned cattle stare, hoof-firm
On the dark pavements of the sky,
And trees are mummies swathed in sleep,
And small dark hills crowd wearily :
Soft multitudes of snow-grey clouds
Without a sound march by.

Down at the bottom of the road
I smell the woody damp
Of that cold spirit in the grass,
And leave my hill-top camp—
Its long gun pointing in the sky—
And take the Moon for lamp.

I stop beside the bright cold glint
Of that thin spirit of the grass,
So gay it is, so innocent ;
I watch its sparkling footsteps pass
Lightly from smooth round stone to stone,
Hid in the dew-hung grass.

My lamp shines in the globes of dew,
And leaps into that crystal wind
Running along the shaken grass
To each dark hole that it can find—
The crystal wind, the Moon my lamp,
Have vanished in a wood that's blind.

High lies my small, my shadowy camp,
Crowded about by small dark hills ;

With sudden small white flowers the sky
  Above the woods' dark greenness fills ;
And hosts of dark-browed, muttering trees
  In trance the white Moon stills.

I move among their tall grey forms,
  A thin moon-glimmering, wandering Ghost,
Who takes his lantern through the world
  In search of life that he has lost,
While watching by that long lean gun
  Upon his small hill post.

DEATH

When I am dead a few poor souls shall grieve
As I grieved for my brother long ago.
  Scarce did my eyes grow dim,
  I had forgotten him ;
I was far off hearing the spring winds blow,
  And many summers burned
When, though still reeling with my eyes aflame,
  I heard that faded name
Whispered one spring amid the hurrying world
  From which, years gone, he turned.

I looked up at my windows and I saw
The trees, thin spectres sucked forth by the moon.
  The air was very still
  Above a distant hill ;
It was the hour of night's full silver moon.

" O art thou there, my brother ? " my soul cried ;
And all the pale stars down bright rivers wept,
As my heart sadly crept
About the empty hills, bathed in that light
That lapped him when he died.

Ah ! it was cold, so cold ; do I not know
How dead my heart on that remembered day !
Clear in a far-away place
I see his delicate face
Just as he called me from my solitary play,
Giving into my hands a tiny tree.
We planted it in the dark, blossomless ground
Gravely, without a sound ;
Then back I went and left him standing by
His birthday gift to me.

In that far land perchance it quietly grows
Drinking the rain, making a pleasant shade ;
Birds in its branches fly
Out of the fathomless sky
Where worlds of circling light arise and fade ;
Blindly it quivers in the bright flood of day,
Or drowned in multitudinous shouts of rain
Glooms o'er the dark-veiled plain—
Buried below, the ghost that's in his bones
Dreams in the sodden clay.

And, while he faded, drunk with beauty's eyes
I kissed bright girls and laughed deep in dumb trees,

That stared fixt in the air
Like madmen in despair,
Gaped up from earth with the escaping breeze.
I saw earth's exaltation slowly creep
Out of their myriad sky-embracing veins.
I laughed along the lanes,
Meeting Death riding in from the hollow seas
Through black-wreathed woods asleep.

I laughed, I swaggered on the cold, hard ground;
Through the grey air trembled a falling wave—
"Thou'rt pale, O Death!" I cried,
Mocking him in my pride;
And passing I dreamed not of that lonely grave,
But of leaf-maidens whose pale, moon-like hands
Above the tree-foam waved in the icy air,
Sweeping with shining hair
Through the green-tinted sky, one moment fled
Out of immortal lands.

One windless autumn night the Moon came out
In a white sea of cloud, a field of snow;
In darkness shaped of trees,
I sank upon my knees
And watched her shining, from the small wood below—
Faintly Death flickered in an owl's far cry—
We floated soundless in the great gulf of space,
Her light upon my face—
Immortal, shining in that dark wood I knelt
And knew I could not die.

And knew I could not die—O Death, did'st thou
Heed my vain glory, standing pale by thy dead ?
There is a spirit who grieves
Amid earth's dying leaves ;
Was't thou that wept beside my brother's bed ?
For I did never mourn nor heed at all
Him passing on his temporal elm-wood bier,
I never shed a tear.
The drooping sky spread grey-winged through my soul,
While stones and earth did fall.

That sound rings down the years—I hear it yet—
All earthly life's a winding funeral—
And though I never wept,
But into the dark coach stept,
Dreaming by night to answer the blood's sweet call,
She who stood there, high breasted, with small wise lips,
And gave me wine to drink and bread to eat,
Has not more steadfast feet,
But fades from my arms as fade from mariners' eyes
The sea's most beauteous ships.

The trees and hills of earth were once as close
As my own brother, they are becoming dreams
And shadows in my eyes ;
More dimly lies
Guaya deep in my soul, the coastline gleams
Faintly along the darkening crystalline seas.
Glimmering and lovely still, 'twill one day go ;
The surging dark will flow

Over my hopes and joys, and blot out all
Earth's hills and skies and trees.

I shall look up one night and see the moon
For the last time shining above the hills,
And thou, silent, wilt ride
Over the dark hillside.
'Twill be, perchance, the time of daffodils—
" How come those bright immortals in the woods?
Their joy being young, did'st thou not drag them all
Into dark graves ere Fall?"
Shall life thus haunt me, wondering, as I go
To thy deep solitudes?

There is a figure with a down-turned torch
Carved on a pillar in an olden time,
A calm and lovely boy
Who comes not to destroy
But to lead age back to its golden prime.
Thus did an antique sculptor draw thee, Death,
With smooth and beauteous brow and faint sweet smile,
Nor haggard, gaunt and vile,
And thou perhaps art Him to whom men may,
Unvexed, give up their breath.

But in my soul thou sittest like a dream
Among earth's mountains, by her dim-coloured seas;
A wild unearthly Shape
In thy dark-glimmering cape,
Piping a tune of wavering melodies,

Thou sittest, ay, thou sittest at the feast
Of my brief life among earth's bright-wreathed flowers,
Stemming the dancing hours
With sombre gleams until, abrupt, thou risest
And all, at once, is ceased.

SOLDIERS IN A SMALL CAMP

THERE is a camp upon a rounded hill
Where men do sleep more closely to the stars,
And tree-like shapes stand at its entrances,
Beside the small, dark, shadow-soldiery.

Deep in the gloom of days of isolation,
Withdrawn, high up from the low, murmuring town,
Those shadows sit, drooping around their fires,
Or move as winds dark-waving in a wood.

Staring at cattle on a neighbouring hill
They are oblivious as is stone or grass—
The clouds passed voiceless over, and the sun
Rose, and lit trees, and vanished utterly.

Then in the awful beauty of the world,
When stars are singing in dark ecstasy,
Those ox-like soldiers sit collected round
A thin, metallic echo of human song :

And click their feet and clap their hands in time,
And wag their heads, and make the white ghost owl
Flit from its branch—but still those tree-like shapes
Stand like archangels dark-winged in the sky.

And presently the soldiers cease to stir;
The thin voice sinks and all at once is dead;
They lie down on their planks and hear the wind,
And feel the darkness fumbling at their souls.

They lie in rows as stiff as tombs or trees,
Their eyeballs imageless, like marble still;
And secretly they feel that roof and walls
Are gone and that they stare into the sky.

It is so black, so black, so black, so black,
Those black-winged shapes have stretched across the world,
Have swallowed up the stars, and if the sun
Rises again, it will be black, black, black.

A RITUAL DANCE

I—The Dance

In the black glitter of night the grey vapour forest
Lies a dark Ghost in the water, motionless, dark,
Like a corpse by the bank fallen, and hopelessly rotting
Where the thin silver soul of the stars silently dances.
The flowers are closed, the birds are carved on the trees,
When out of the forest glide hundreds of spear-holding shadows,
In smooth dark ivory bodies their eyeballs gleaming
Forming a gesturing circle beneath the moon.
The bright-eyed shadows, the tribe in ritual gathered,
Are dancing and howling, the embryo soul of a nation:

In loud drum-beating monotonous the tightly stretched skins
Of oxen that stared at the stars are singing wild pæans:

Wild pæans for food that magically grew in the clearings
When he that was slain was buried and is resurrected,
And a green mist arose from the mud and shone in the moon,
A great delirium of faces, a new generation.

The thin wafer moon it is there, it is there in the sky,
The hand-linkèd circle raise faces of mad exaltation—
Dance, O you Hunters, leap madly upon the flung shields,
Shoot arrows into the sky, thin moon-seeking needles:

Now you shall have a harvest, a belly-full rapture,
There shall be many fat women, full grown, and smoother than honey,
Their limbs like ivory rounded, and firm as a berry,
Their lips full of food and their eyes full of hunger for men!

The heat of the earth arises, a faint love mist
Wan with over-desiring, and in the marshes
Blindly the mud stirs, clouding the dark shining water,
And troubling the still soft swarms of fallen stars.

There is bright sweat upon the bodies of cattle,
Great vials of life motionless in the moonlight,
Breathing faint mists over the warm, damp ground;
And the cry of a dancer rings through the shadowy forest.

The tiger is seeking his mate and his glassy eyes
Are purple and shot with ſtarlight in the grass shining,
The fiery grass tortured out of the mud and writhing
Under the sun, now shivering and pale in the moon.

The shadows are dancing, dancing, dancing, dancing:
The grey vapour arms of the foreſt lie dreaming around them;
The cold, shining moonlight falls from their bodies and faces,
But caught in their eyes lies prisoned and faintly gleaming:

And they return to their dwellings within the grey foreſt,
Into their dark huts, burying the moonlight with them,
Burying the trees and the ſtars and the flowing river,
And the glittering spears, and their dark, evocative geſtures.

II—Sleep

Hollow the world in the moonlit hour when the birds are shadows small,
Loſt in the swarm of giant leaves and myriad branches tall;
When vaſt thick boughs hang across the sky like solid limbs of night,
Dug from ſtill quarries of grey-black air by the pale transparent light,
And the purple and golden blooms of the sun, each crimson and spotted flower,
Are folded up or have faded away, as the ſtill intangible power

Floats out of the sky, falls shimmering down, a silver-shadowy bloom,
On the spear-pointed forest a fragile crown, in the soul a soft, bright gloom;
Hollow the world when the shadow of man lies prone and still on its floor,
And the moonlight shut from his empty heart weeps softly against his door,
And his terror and joy but a little dream in the corner of his house,
And his voice dead in the darkness 'mid the twittering of a mouse.

III

Hollow the world! hollow the world!
And its dancers shadow-grey;
And the moon a silver-shadowy bloom
Fading and fading away;
And the forest's grey vapour, and all the trees
Shadows against the sky;
And the soul of man and his ecstasies
A night-forgotten cry.
Hollow the world! hollow the world!

THE SEARCH FOR THE NIGHTINGALE

Beside a stony, shallow stream I sat
In a deep gully underneath a hill.
I watched the water trickle down dark moss
And shake the tiny boughs of maidenhair,
And billow on the bodies of cold stone.

And sculptured clear
Upon the shoulder of that aerial peak
Stood trees, the fragile skeletons of light,
High in a bubble blown
Of visionary stone.

Under that azurine transparent arch
The hill, the rocks, the trees
Were still and dreamless as the printed word
Black on the snowy page.
It was the song of some diviner bird
Than this still country knew:
The words were twigs of burnt and blackened trees
From which there trilled a voice,
Shadowy and faint, as though it were the song
The water carolled as it flowed along.

Lifting my head, I gazed upon the world,
Carved in the breathless heat as in a gem,
And watched the parroquets green-feathered fly
Through crystal vacancy, and perch in trees
That glittered in a thin, blue, haze-like dream,
And the voice faded, though the water dinned
Against the stones its dimming memory.
And I ached then
To hear that song burst out upon that scene,
Startling an earth where it had never been.

And then I came unto an older world.
The woods were damp, the sun
Shone in a watery mist, and soon was gone;

The trees were thick with leaves heavy and old,
The sky was grey, and blue, and like the sea
Rolling with mists and shadowy veils of foam.
I heard the roaring of an ancient wind
Among the elms and in the tattered pines ;
Lighting pale hollows in the cloud-dark sky,
A ghostly ship, the moon, flew scudding by.

" Oh is it here," I cried, " that bird that sings
So that the traveller in his frenzy weeps ? "
It was the autumn of the year, and leaves
Fell with a dizzy moan, and all the trees
Roared like the sea at my small impotent voice.
And if the bird was there it did not sing,
And I knew not its haunts, or where it went,
But carven stood and raved !
In that old wood that dripped upon my face
Upturned below, pale in its passionate chase.

And years went by, and I grew slowly cold :
I had forgotten what I once had sought,
There are no passions that do not grow dim,
And like a fire imagination sinks
Into the ashes of the mind's cold grate.
And if I dreamed, I dreamed of that far land,
That coast of pearl upon a summer sea,
Whose frail trees in unruffled amber sleep,
Gaudy with jewelled birds, whose feathers spray
Bright founts of colour through the tranquil day.

The hill, the gully, and the ſtony ſtream
I had not thought on when this spring I sat
In a ſtrange room with candles guttering down
Into the flickering silence. From the moon
Among the trees ſtill-wreathed upon the sky
There came the sudden twittering of a ghoſt.
And I ſtept out from darkness, and I saw
The great pale sky immense, transparent, filled
With boughs and mountains and wide-shining lakes
Where ſtillness, crying in a thin voice, breaks.

It was the voice of that imagined bird.
I saw the gully and that ancient hill,
The water trickling down from Paradise
Shaking the tiny boughs of maidenhair.
There sat the dreaming boy.
And O! I wept to see that scene again,
To read the black print on that snowy page,
I wept and all was ſtill.
No shadow came into that sun-ſteeped glen,
No sound of earth, no voice of living men.

Was it a dream or was it that in me
A god awoke and gazing on his dream
Saw that dream rise and gaze into its soul,
Finding, Narcissus-like, its image there:
A Song, a transitory Shape on water blown,
Descending down the bright cascades of time,
The shadowieſt-flowering, ripple-woven bloom
As ghoſtly as ſtill waters' unseen foam

That lies upon the air, as that song lay
Within my heart on one far summer day ?

Carved in the azure air white peacocks fly,
Their fanning wings stir not the crystal trees,
Bright parrots fade through dimming turquoise days,
And music scrolls its lightning calm and bright
On the pale sky where thunder cannot come.
Into that world no ship has ever sailed,
No seaman gazing with hand-shaded eyes
Has ever seen its shore whiten the waves.
But to that land the nightingale has flown,
Leaving bright treasure on this calm air blown.

TENT, MY DEAREST TENT

My soul is like a wandering Arab
Who, solitary, brings
His house among the desert stars
On hill or plain, by palm or brook,
And 'mid the loneliness of ways
Thus to his comfort sings :

Among the Universe's winds
Tent, my dearest tent,
Thou dost house a quiet breath,
A soft breath, a little breath,
A leaf upon the tree
Making a quiet lament.

Leaf, thou art a rib of Wind
That trembles through the sky,
Quivering into a grosser dress,
A dress of flesh, a body—
O universal Gale of life,
Thy fluttering leaf am I.

And—light of Moon and Sun—
Thou, Foliage, and Snows
(Fading upon this star where I
Were else dark, pitched in dark),
Bright Fabric of my walls,
That in the darkness blows,

Amidst the wilderness of Space
Thy glimmer may be spent,
But there are other lights that burn
'Mid other hills and other snows;
And somewhere once more shall be pitched
Tent, my dearest tent!

My soul is like a wandering Arab
Who crossing hill and plain
Under night's glittering suns shall pitch
His tent of life, his fluttering sign,
And when dawn rises on the world
It shall have gone again.

SORROWING FOR CHILDHOOD DEPARTED

Who is there among us who has found the key
Of the treasure that is locked in the hearts of men?
Only the poet lonely in his chamber
Or the man remembering his childhood again.

Hearing gay voices, my heart is hollow,
An empty room with bright colours on the walls;
The speech of my brother is no more than a traffic
That remote and coldly on my dull brain falls.

I am deaf to the song in the speech of my fellows,
I have outwitted my childhood's desires;
And where have I travelled that to the far horizon
Dead in the landscape are earth's bright fires?

Didst thou ever murder, Macbeth, thy sorrow,
Didst thou ever murder thy soul's young joy,
Thou hadst never flinched from the life of another,
Thou hadst but with laughter stol'n from him a toy!

Would that a spirit had stolen from me
The glittering baubles of my cunning mind,
And left me the sweet forest of my wondering childhood,
Its transparent water in tall trees enshrined.

Then was I happy. Love was my companion;
I was in communion with star and stream;
With bird and with flower I was linked in rapture,
We stared at each other—the valley's dream.

Out of the mountains we were carven,
Birds and flowers, stream, rock and child—
O but I belong there! I am torn from my body,
In that far-away forest it lies exiled!

There falls the water transparently shining,
Hangs there a flower that blooms in my eyes.
Long have I been ready! let me go thither,
And unloosen my limbs to those dream-coloured skies.

O that it were possible! but that land has vanished;
The magic of that valley has crumbled away;
Bright crowds are there only, the mind's cold idola;
And my footprints on the dead ground startle the day.

DOROTHY WELLESLEY

WINTER FLAME

Sun-blistered ships on opal seas,
Pacific stars spilt round the skies,
What have I now to do with these
Who know the wonder of your eyes?

I rose and went in search of pain,
When the gay spring passed through the land;
Oh, clamorous spring, that cried in vain
The pulse and magic of your hand.

Then, sudden sleet and blossom flew
On currents of the glittering gale,
And the starch-hyacinth's spikes of blue
Flared proudly through the fallen hail.

But island spring and starry wake
Left love asleep, made calm a crime,
Oh, fretting heart that longed to break,
That broke and bloomed in dark and rime.

Now, slow teams climb the winter flank
New-ribboned of the upland track;
Criss-cross the heavens blanched and blank
Work down the wind with flying wrack

From fieldside wood, and forward blown
Go branch and leaf and flying mane,
While horses move deliberate down
To strawstacks by the sunken lane.

Or by a smooth and rook-specked hill
The sculptured marble clouds are curled,
Like Genii of unholy will
Rising in smoke above the world.

Now, light and shade, from cloud or rift,
May rollick forth with banners brave,
And from a field the wind may lift
And chase the colour that it gave

So gallantly two breaths ago.
Or sheep-cries rack a blinded scene,
When sheets of fog are twisted low,
And strangled earth is robbed of green.

Now, in the hedge the Traveller's Joy
Clambers like pipe smoke up the air,
And skeined along the liquid sky
Each evening tree is like a prayer.

Now, in the fast oncoming night,
Beneath the steely flying snows,
The garden stretches black and white,
That gave the lupin and the rose.

What care if tropic harbours swirl,
Grape-coloured in the morning shine,
Or through the red pomegranates curl
The swags and tangles of the vine?

What care that beauty dwells supreme
In men and women, towns and ships,
Set dark against the gold of dream:
Temples, bright boats, and carven lips?

What care for hillsides where the heat
Puffs acrid from the glowing stone?
I've heard beneath my head the beat
Of your strong heart, which is my own.

What care though fire and colour flared
Eternal from the coral skies,
To one who in this darkness dared
To claim the secrets of your eyes?

LOST LANE

Catkins, like caterpillars slung a-row,
Roof over, with sloe blossom, this lost track
And speckle it with shadow. Deep in June
Afloat with weed and wrack,
It sways, a sunken garden in a tide

Of apple green, and there
Each evening, at the light end of the lane
Cassiopeia, Lady in her Chair,
Sits light and elegant, watching with me
The Zodiac blaze on the twelve compass points :
The spiteful Scorpion ; sentimental Twins ;
The Crab with crazy joints ;
The Water Carrier, watering the dark
With drench of diamonds ; jewelled Archer, wild
With hair of scattered gold ; Goat, Virgin, Scales
Aswarm on space like spattered bees ; once styled
From dark Chaldean towers the gates of suns,
Triumphal arches.
Here, where labourers pass,
Striding the stile, the polished bar has caught
Those royal highways in a looking-glass,
Holding them prisoner till the autumn comes.
Then with a swoop and glitter,
Then with a gale the Sickle gets aswing
Across the sky, to reap the stars, to litter
With spirtled stars the fallow and the corn,
The villages we know ; till roof and spire,
And elm-trees, massed like ostrich feather plumes
Are streaked and shot with fire.

They fall beyond the fields.
Arise, pursue
Sea-ward, and sift the back wash of a tide
For starfish from the sky,
Among wet light of shells, rose, russet, pied.

They fall beyond the sea.
On thundering sea holms, through white ribs of hulls
Skied up on ridges (ships that followed them),
Watched by dark eyes of skulls.

HORSES ON THE FELL

That too is England ; there the fell
Encloses tarns in craters, there
The walls of slate form pits of hell,
Black pools shut inward from the air.

The ponies know the paths, their neat,
Their tiny hooves, on sheer descents,
Tread circumspectly, and the peat
Rings hollow on the thudding pents.

The burns blow chains of bubbles, spray
The moss, pin-cushioned all around,
Swung bells and stars are drenched all day,
Rock gardens hang above the sound.

For water goes with twists and turns
Abruptly down the dale,
Till all the shrill and flurrying burns
Swirl down, majestic, to the Swale.

There quartz and boulder, slung askew,
Topple and slither from the screes,
While stone escarpments ribbed with yew
Form tiers of twilight palaces.

But far above, the scud and hail
Patters and raps on humps of stones,
White objects strewn among the shale,
Sheep skulls with teeth, and stranger bones.

. . . . . .

The horses stand on stormy skies
Hind quarters windward, like a thong
Their manes are lashed across their eyes ;
On the streaked sunsets go headlong
The sounding splendour of their trails,
Before the dawns, light windy teams,
Winged stallions of the Nordic tales,
They are not horses, they are dreams.

For see ! Beneath storm-buffeted stars
Their flanks are phosphorescent, then
What Holy Twins, what Songs, what Wars
Possess them, through the sleep of men ?

See ! Taut with slashing tails unshorn
They wait in twilight, dappled, dun,
Till in the great white spate of dawn,
They are the Horses of the Sun.
They drink the fountains, leap on death,
Chimera, Hero-friends they know,—
Fiery and sacred is their breath,
And like the whirlwind they must go
While lasts the world, upon the heights.
Their hooves ring heavenward silver shod,
They strike the lightning, scattering lights,
This is the cavalcade of God.

Dorothy Wellesley

OLD CALL

Give back the adolescent world, the prime
Fierce currents of the blood ; the rough, the harsh,
The crag, the waste, the marsh.
In these low-lighted flowery rooms they call,
Those wild gold eyes that gleam in woods of time,
By wide warm rivers darkened by giant leaves,
Unconquered, from a rank-breathed animal,
Beholding faiths and valours that we knew
With hot dawn-drips, unsentimental eyes.

Here, Hamlet-like, we whisper : " What is true ? "
Cry fearsome : " Where is God ? " and inly know
We have nor war, nor peace, nor friend, nor foe.
Lives that crouch back, to charge your agony,
Loves that draw back, to drive on your desire,
Know blood and sweat, give me the forest cry,
The circled stones about the friendly fire,
The torrent, and the faring, and the laughter,
The sleep that follows after.

I'll seek the spaces void of all but wings,
That beat up wind, or plane before a gale ;
Or take the mountain trail
Across the granite Himalayan gate,
Where, peaks above the gentians and the lings,
Undreamed of seeds fly feckless, and the slight
Celestial Poppies rise from shale and slate.
Or ride a horse towards a gaping morn,
Watching his patient ears against the light.

Or board a grain-ship chartered for the Horn,
Where green seas rear to ceilings overhead,
To laugh at and to challenge, so that dread
Of pain itself is purged, washed off the soul,
Vanquished for ever; so the waves which fleck
The foam against the flesh shall make us whole
From fear of death for ever; on such a deck
Win back the battle-faith for life; and after
Greet the great sleep with laughter.

IOLO ANEURIN WILLIAMS

FROM A FLEMISH GRAVEYARD

January 1915

A year hence may the grass that waves
O'er English men in Flemish graves,
Coating this clay with green of peace
And softness of a year's increase,
Be kind and lithe as English grass
To bend and nod as the winds pass ;
It was for grass on English hills
These bore too soon the last of ills.

And may the wind be brisk and clean,
And singing cheerfully between
The bents a pleasant-burdened song
To cheer these English dead along ;
For English songs and English winds
Are they that bred these English minds.

And may the circumstantial trees
Dip, for these dead ones, in the breeze,
And make for them their silver play
Of spangled boughs each shiny day.
Thus may these look above, and see
And hear the wind in grass and tree,
And watch a lark in heaven stand,
And think themselves in their own land.

A MONUMENT

(After an Ancient Fashion)

Traveller, turn a mournful eye
Where my lady's ashes lie;
If thou hast a sweet thine own
Pity me, that am alone;—
Yet, if thou no lover be,
Nor hast been, I'll pity thee.

AT A MUSIC HALL

"When dreams come true," the ballad-singer sang,
And loudly through the hall the plaudits rang;
For some folk's time has been so ill-employed
They've hardly glanced at either Jung or Freud.

A DULL DAY

How break this cloud that hangs to-day
About my stifled mind?
How wake to life these muffled ears,
These eyes so nearly blind?

The world, I know, lies beautiful
To-day, as every day:—
I see the sparrows from the tree
Shaking a raindrop spray;

And times there are when sight of this
My inmost soul would wring
With joy for the fresh changefulness
Of each familiar thing.

But not to-day, when all my soul
Knows nought but dull and grey—
Yet yearns for a vague loveliness
Ten million worlds away.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Lady, lady, now you lie
Under a black and earthy sky,
To lighten which no light clouds pass—
There on the dark side of the grass ;
Do you not miss our fair and wide
Life with its many-lighted pride,
Wherewith your coloured beauty vied ?

Friend, though fair my sight, maybe,
Sight was never joy to me,
And dark is a shawl that's kindly laid
On eyes Life could but make afraid.

THE BLACK LAKE

As one the eye mirrors not
But the heart remembers,
In the dark lake's deepest grot
Live the sun's embers.

Black 'mid the mountains steep
In the cleft where they caught her,
Prisoned and still and deep
Lies the lake water.

The sun o'er the hill's high edge
Scarce looks in a summer ;
Safe holds the lake the pledge
Of that dear rare-comer.

Safe 'neath her mantle black
The light lies treasured,
Till again that lovely track
By her lover is measured.

SPRING SUNSHINE

To fiery sun, blue firmament,
To golden bloom, and emerald frond,
Oh ! what a piteous instrument
Am I, who only half respond !

TO "ANON"

May Clio never come to rout you
From that kind shade around you hung :
Enough, to know one thing about you—
The cadenced beauty of your tongue.

A PRAYER

Non omnis moriar. I pray
That, when I'm dead a hundred years,
Whate'er of me yet lives may say,
" Joy won his laughter, Grief his tears."

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

SONG OF THE DARK AGES

We digged our trenches on the down
Beside old barrows, and the wet
White chalk we shovelled from below ;
It lay like drifts of thawing snow
On parados and parapet :

Until a pick neither struck flint
Nor split the yielding chalky soil,
But only calcined human bone :
Poor relic of that Age of Stone
Whose ossuary was our spoil.

Home we marched singing in the rain,
And all the while, beneath our song,
I mused how many springs should wane
And still our trenches scar the plain :
The monument of an old wrong.

But then, I thought, the fair green sod
Will wholly cover that white stain,
And soften, as it clothes the face
Of those old barrows, every trace
Of violence to the patient plain.

And careless people, passing by,
Will speak of both in casual tone,

Saying: "You see the toil they made:
The age of iron, pick and spade,
Here jostles with the Age of Stone."

Yet either from that happier race
Will merit but a passing glance;
And they will leave us both alone:
Poor savages who wrought in stone—
Poor savages who fought in France.

BÊTE HUMAINE

Riding through Ruwu swamp, about sunrise,
I saw the world awake; and as the ray
Touched the tall grasses where they sleeping lay,
Lo, the bright air alive with dragon-flies:
With brittle wings aquiver, and great eyes
Piloting crimson bodies, slender and gay.
I aimed at one, and struck it, and it lay
Broken and lifeless, with fast-fading dyes. . . .
Then my soul sickened with a sudden pain
And horror, at my own careless cruelty,
That in an idle moment I had slain
A creature whose sweet life it is to fly:
Like beasts that prey with tooth and claw. . . .
Nay, they
Must slay to live, but what excuse had I?

THE GIFT

MARCHING on Tanga, marching the parch'd plain
Of wavering spear-grass past Pangani river,
England came to me—me who had always ta'en
But never given before—England, the giver,
In a vision of three poplar-trees that shiver
On still evenings of summer, after rain,
By Slapton Ley, where reed-beds start and quiver
When scarce a ripple moves the upland grain.
Then I thanked God that now I had suffered pain
And, as the parch'd plain, thirst, and lain awake
Shivering all night through till cold daybreak :
In that I count these sufferings my gain
And her acknowledgment. Nay, more, would fain
Suffer as many more for her sweet sake.

THE LEANING ELM

BEFORE my window, in days of winter hoar
Huddled a mournful wood ;
Smooth pillars of beech, domed chestnut, sycamore,
In stony sleep they stood :
But you, unhappy elm, the angry west
Had chosen from the rest,
Flung broken on your brothers' branches bare
And left you leaning there
So dead that when the breath of winter cast
Wild snow upon the blast,

The other living branches, downward bowed,
Shook free their crystal shroud
And shed upon your blackened trunk beneath
Their livery of death. . . .

On windless nights between the beechen bars
I watched cold stars
Throb whitely in the sky, and dreamily
Wondered if any life lay locked in thee :
If still the hidden sap secretly moved
As water in the icy winterbourne
Floweth unheard :
And half I pitied you your trance forlorn :
You could not hear, I thought, the voice of any bird,
The shadowy cries of bats in dim twilight
Or cool voices of owls crying by night. . . .
Hunting by night under the hornèd moon :
Yet half I envied you your wintry swoon,
Till, on this morning mild, the sun, new-risen
Steals from his misty prison ;
The frozen fallows glow, the black trees shaken
In a clear flood of sunlight vibrating awaken :
And lo, your ravaged bole, beyond belief
Slenderly fledged anew with tender leaf
As pale as those twin vanes that break at last
In a tiny fan above the black beech-mast
Where no blade springeth green
But pallid bells of the shy helleborine.
What is this ecstasy that overwhelms
The dreaming earth ? See, the embrownèd elms
Crowding purple distances warm the depths of the wood

A new-born wind tosses their tassels brown,
His white clouds dapple the down:
Into a green flame bursting the hedgerows stand.
Soon, with banners flying, Spring will walk the land. . . .
There is no day for thee, my soul, like this,
No spring of lovely words. Nay, even the kiss
Of mortal love that maketh man divine
This light cannot outshine:
Nay, even poets, they whose frail hands catch
The shadow of vanishing beauty, may not match
This leafy ecstasy. Sweet words may cull
Such magical beauty as time may not destroy;
But we, alas, are not more beautiful:
We cannot flower in beauty as in joy.
We sing, our musèd words are sped, and then
Poets are only men
Who age, and toil, and sicken. . . . This maim'd tree
May stand in leaf when I have ceased to be.

PROTHALAMION

When the evening came my love said to me:
Let us go into the garden now that the sky is cool;
The garden of black hellebore and rosemary
Where wild woodruff spills in a milky pool.

Low we passed in the twilight, for the wavering heat
Of day had waned; and round that shaded plot
Of secret beauty the thickets clustered sweet:
Here is heaven, our hearts whispered, but our lips
spake not.

Between that old garden and seas of lazy foam
Gloomy and beautiful alleys of trees arise
With spire of cypress and dreamy beechen dome,
So dark that our enchanted sight knew nothing but the skies :

Veiled with a soft air, drench'd in the roses' musk
Or the husky, dark carnation's breath of clove :
No stars burned in their deeps, but through the dusk
I saw my love's eyes, and they were brimmed with love.

No star their secret ravished, no wasting moon
Mocked the sad transience of those eternal hours :
Only the soft unseeing heaven of June,
The ghosts of great trees, and the sleeping flowers.

For doves that crooned in the leafy noonday now
Were silent ; the night-jar sought his secret covers,
Nor even a mild sea-whisper moved a creaking bough—
Was ever a silence deeper made for lovers ?

Was ever a moment meeter made for love ?
Beautiful are your close lips beneath my kiss ;
And all your yielding sweetness beautiful—
Oh, never in all the world was such a night as this !

SEASCAPE

Over that morn hung heaviness, until,
Near sunless noon, we heard the ship's bell beating
A melancholy staccato on dead metal ;

Saw the bare-footed watch come running aft;
Felt, far below, the sudden telegraph jangle
Its harsh metallic challenge, thrice repeated:
Stand by. Half-speed ahead. Slow. Stop her!
They stopped.
The plunging pistons sank like a stopt heart:
She held, she swayed, a bulk, a hollow carcass
Of blistered iron that the grey-green, waveless,
Unruffled tropic waters slapped languidly.
Burial at sea! A Portuguese official. . . .
Poor fever-broken devil from Mozambique:
Came on half-tight: the doctor calls it heat-stroke.
Why do they travel steerage? It's the exchange:
So many million reis to the pound.
What did he look like? No one ever saw him:
Took to his bunk, and drank and drank and died.
They're ready! Silence!
We clustered to the rail,
Curious and half-ashamed. The well-deck spread
A comfortable gulf of segregation
Between ourselves and death. *Burial at sea.* . . .
The master holds a black book at arm's length;
His droning voice comes for'ard: *This our brother.* . . .
We therefore commit his body to the deep
To be turned into corruption. . . .
The bo's'n whispers
Hoarsely behind his hand: *Now, all together!*
The hatch-cover is tilted; a mummy of sail-cloth
Well ballasted with iron shoots clear of the poop;
Falls, like a diving gannet. The green sea closes
Its burnished skin; the snaky swell smooths over. . . .

While he, the man of the steerage, goes down, down,
Feet-foremost, sliding swiftly down the dim water :
Swift to escape
Those plunging shapes with pale, empurpled bellies
That swirl and veer about him. He goes down
Unerringly, as though he knew the way
Through green, through gloom, to absolute watery darkness,
Where no weed sways nor curious fin quivers :
To the sad, sunless deeps, where, endlessly,
A downward drift of death spreads its wan mantle
In the wave-moulded valleys that shall enfold him
Till the sea give up its dead.
There shall he lie dispersed amid great riches :
Such gold, such arrogance, so many bold hearts !
All the sunken armadas pressed to powder
By weight of incredible seas ! That mingled wrack
No livening sun shall visit till the crust
Of earth be riven, or this rolling planet
Reel on its axis ; till the moon-chained tides,
Unloosed, deliver up that white Atlantis,
Whose naked peaks shall bleach above the slaked
Thirst of Sahara, fringed by weedy tangles
Of Atlas's drown'd cedars, frowning Eastward
To where the sands of India lie cold,
And heaped Himalaya's a rib of coral
Slowly uplifted, grain on grain. . . .
We dream
Too long ! Another jangle of alarum
Stabs at the engines : *Slow. Half-speed. Full-speed !*
The great bearings rumble ; the screw churns, frothing

Opaque water to downward swelling plumes
Milky as woodsmoke. A shoal of flying-fish
Spurts out like animate spray. The warm breeze wakens,
And we pass on, forgetting,
Toward the solemn horizon of bronzed cumulus
That bounds our brooding sea, gathering gloom
That, when night falls, will dissipate in flaws
Of watery lightning, washing the hot sky,
Cleansing all hearts of heat and restlessness,
Until, with day, another blue be born.

THE QUAILS

(In the South of Italy the peasants put out the eyes of a captured quail so that its cries may attract the flocks of spring migrants into their nets.)

ALL through the night
I have heard the stuttering call of a blind quail,
A caged decoy, under a cairn of stones,
Crying for light as the quails cry for love.

Other wanderers,
Northward from Africa winging on numb pinions, dazed
With beating winds and the sobbing of the sea,
Hear, in a breath of sweet land-herbage, the call
Of the blind one, their sister. . . .
Hearing, their fluttered hearts
Take courage, and they wheel in their dark flight,
Knowing that their toil is over, dreaming to see
The white stubble of Abruzzi smitten with dawn

And spilt grain lying in the furrows, the squandered gold
That is the delight of quails in their spring mating.

Land scents grow keener,
Penetrating the dank and bitter odour of brine
That whitens their feathers ;
Far below, the voice of their sister calls them
To plenty, and sweet water, and fulfilment.
Over the pallid margin of dim seas breaking,
Over the thickening in the darkness that is land,
They fly. Their flight is ended. Wings beat no more.
Downward they drift, one by one, like dark petals,
Slowly, listlessly falling,
Into the mouth of horror :
The nets. . . .

Where men come trampling and crying with bright lanterns,
Plucking their weak, entangled claws from the meshes of net,
Clutching the soft brown bodies mottled with olive,
Crushing the warm, fluttering flesh, in hands stained with blood,
Till their quivering hearts are stilled, and the bright eyes,
That are a polished agate, glaze in death.

But the blind one, in her wicker cage, without ceasing
Haunts this night of spring with her stuttering call,
Knowing nothing of the terror that walks in darkness,
Knowing only that some cruelty has stolen the light
That is life, and that she must cry until she dies.

I, in the darkness,
Heard, and my heart grew sick. But I know that to-
morrow
A smiling peasant will come with a basket of quails
Wrapped in vine-leaves, prodding them with blood-
stained fingers,
Saying, " Signore, you must cook them thus, and thus,
With a sprig of basil inside them." And I shall thank
him,
Carrying the piteous carcases into the kitchen
Without a pang, without shame.

" Why should I be ashamed ? Why should I rail
Against the cruelty of men ? Why should I pity,
Seeing that there is no cruelty which men can imagine
To match the subtle dooms that are wrought against them
By blind spores of pestilence : seeing that each of us,
Lured by dim hopes, flutters in the toils of death
On a cold star that is spinning blindly through space
Into the nets of time ? "

So cried I, bitterly thrusting pity aside,
Closing my lids to sleep. But sleep came not,
And pity, with sad eyes,
Crept to my side, and told me
That the life of all creatures is brave and pitiful
Whether they be men, with dark thoughts to vex them,
Or birds, wheeling in the swift joys of flight,
Or brittle ephemerids, spinning to death in the haze
Of gold that quivers on dim evening waters ;
Nor would she be denied.

The harshness died
Within me, and my heart
Was caught and fluttered like the palpitant heart
Of a brown quail, flying
To the call of her blind sister,
And death, in the spring night.

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